



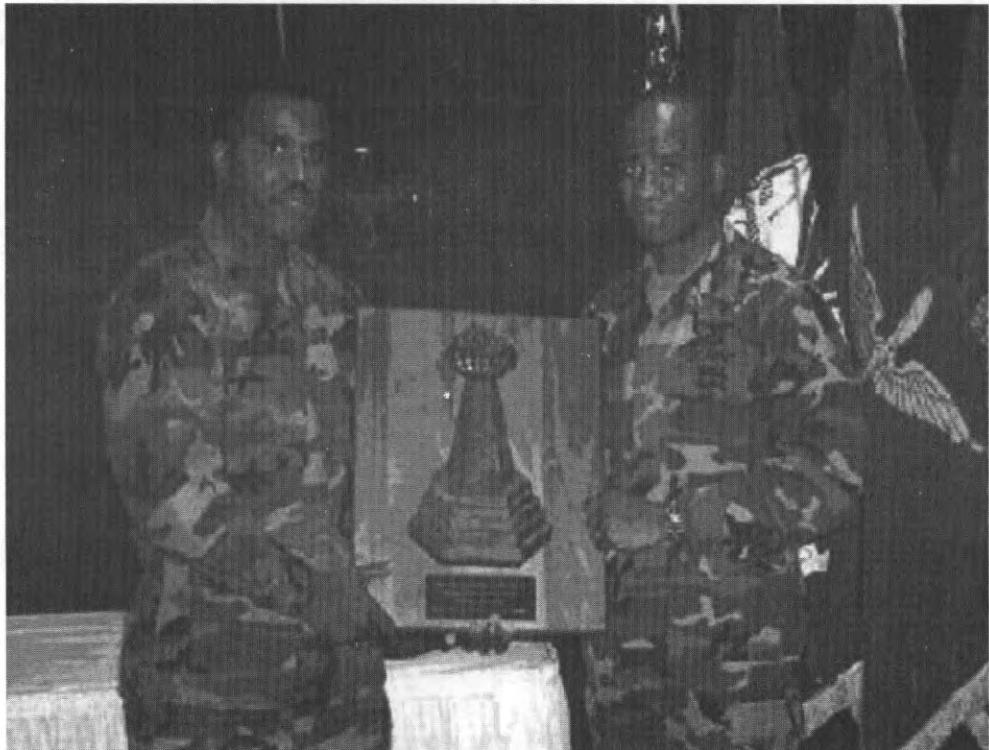
THE DUSTOFFER



DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 2002

2001 LTG Ellis D. Parker Award Winner 52nd Medical Evacuation Battalion



MG John D. Curran, Commanding General, U.S. Army Aviation Center, presented the prestigious award to LTC Donald R. West and CSM Luis A. Etienne during the 2002 Aviation Senior Leader's Conference in February 2002.

President's Message

Many thanks to Jeff Mankoff for his two years of service and leadership in the DUSTOFF Association, and congratulations to the Executive Council for planning an outstanding reunion. We're already working hard to make next year's reunion even better.

The DUSTOFF Association continues to grow and receive strong support of its members. We're currently over 1,700 members strong (821 life members), and 45 new members have joined since November 2001. Thank you to the leadership in the field who take the time to promote the Association, express the importance of being a member and give their soldiers the opportunity to join and participate in the reunions. Your nominations of candidates for Crew Member of the Year, Rescue of the Year, and DUSTOFF Hall of Fame maintain the DUSTOFF legacy and help make the Association relevant for our new members.

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On an average day, the Army has soldiers in about 75 countries around the world. There are medics in every location and DUSTOFF crews supporting them. DUSTOFF crews find themselves in harm's way once again. The reports we receive from the deployed forces is that they continue to provide the same great, dedicated support to our soldiers that DUSTOFF provided for decades. We're very proud of their outstanding support of current operations while perpetuating the DUSTOFF legacy. Keep them in your prayers.

DUSTOFF!

DUSTOFF Association

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Letters & e-mail to *The DUSTOFFer*

Dear Editor: When we established the Florida DUSTOFF Association, all or most of our members donated one of their unit patches from Vietnam. These were all sewn on a poncho liner, and it became a banner of sorts for us. For two years, the patch blanket was proudly displayed day and night at our reunions, and we had no problems. Several years ago, that banner was stolen by someone during the night. We had a suspect, but couldn't prove it. It wasn't one of our members. Since I am now Chairman of the Board, I have decided I want to make it a project to replace this banner.

Would it be possible for the DUSTOFFer to run a little story about this incident to see if we could get some of the active duty units to send us one of their unit patches? I wouldn't dream of asking anyone for their original Nam patches. We would just like to replace our banner.

Don (Hoss) Caldwell
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Dear Editor: (Talking about awards) In August 1967, I was back from a standby, and my ship was in periodic. Captain Craig Honaman, who was our awards officer, needed to go to the Military Advisory Command, Vietnam (MACV) awards section, so I volunteered to drive him over there. We arrived at MACV to check on several awards, and as I remember, two Silver Stars were pending. Captain Honaman was talking to the Awards Officer and found out that they had been downgraded to DFCs, and he was upset. Everyone had recommended approval, and statements from the infantry supported the awards. I will remember as long as I live the answer the MACV lieutenant colonel told him: "Captain, you have to understand, if we gave DUSTOFF a medal for every heroic action, all we would be doing is giving DUSTOFF medals. It requires a certain amount of heroism just to fly in DUSTOFF, and they have to reach a higher bar."

For years, I didn't understand what he was saying. But I have come to realize that this was the greatest compliment anyone could give us. I was lucky to live through the medals I received in DUSTOFF and in Lam Son 719 in 1971; getting medals is something that comes from doing your job. The one thing I know for sure, knowing and flying with Mike Novosel and Pat Brady, is that they, like most of us, are wondering why they were given the medal. We all feel, I think, that the true heroes are on the wall in Washington.

Thomas L. "Egor" Johnson

Editor's Note: The following letter was sent to *The DUSTOFFer* after his reflection on the Saturday morning discussion at the reunion business meeting concerning the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame. The author of the following letter is a DUSTOFF pilot from the early years in Vietnam, lifetime member of the Association, and a retired military chaplain. He penned this letter in response to a potential nominee who had protested that he "... did not deserve or warrant his efforts. The men performed well, and I enjoyed the one of many gifts that the Lord has given me."

Dear Nominee: You say you did not deserve or warrant my efforts on your behalf for the nomination to the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame, and on one level I agree with you. Everyone who honorably served and risked their lives to save the lives of others as a DUSTOFF crew member truly belongs in the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame. On another and yet a higher level, however, I disagree with you. You and several others whom I personally know, and those others (dead or alive) who are known only to the DUSTOFF membership, should be singled out for their outstanding contributions, so the whole DUSTOFF story and history may be told for the benefit of those who will follow. Tradition is history. History is the account of the stories of those who make it. Tradition and history teach and carry the future. Without the stories of people like you and others to come, who will tell the story? Very few will read the history of DUSTOFF in the annals of the files of the past, but many will read the plaques and stories on the walls of museums and public buildings. Memorials and stories belong to the public and to the future. We must tell the DUSTOFF story, or there will be no DUSTOFF for the generations to come. Your contributions are valued, and your story must be told—not for your sake, but for the sake of the future, a place we cannot go.

Walt Harris

(Continued)

Responding to an article in *Vietnam Magazine* about changes in tactics and military operations with regard to removing casualties from battlefield, to wit:

"This line of reasoning was, of course, encouraged by the Pentagon's strategy, based on attrition and body count, in which it was just as important to minimize American deaths as it was to maximize the enemy's. These two goals, however, often turned out to be incompatible. Rescuing one's own wounded often meant that the battle against the enemy had to be broken off at a critical time, or diverted into unplanned action."

—a famous former DUSTOFF medic wrote:

Dear Editor: We were taught in medical training at Fort Sam that the psychological factors involved in removing the dead and wounded outweighed almost all other factors. As it was explained, how can you expect a soldier to function properly and perform his duties while his best friend is next to him with his head blown off?

That always stuck with me while we were getting our asses shot at in Vietnam. The poor grunt didn't have anywhere to go, and it must have created quite a burden to sit there and see all of the dead and wounded or the body bags lined up.

When I first arrived in country, I thought it was a waste to load bodies during a battle, but I soon changed my mind. The sight of body bags always had more of a sting to me than looking at the actual body lying there. That may sound strange to some others. I always preferred to have the bodies in the back of the ship, as opposed to body bags. I used body bags only once in Vietnam, and that was because three dead Americans had been caught in an ambush and it took us three days to get the area cleared. You can let your imagination figure out what they looked like and how bad the smell was.

At Binh Gia, I had to make a second trip across an open field for about 75 yards under fire to get the crew members who were alive back to our ship. This was supposed to be Walt Harris's last mission in country, and he was thinking it might be his last mission ever. For some reason, body bags had an effect on me that said, "This is final. At night it used to scare the s— out of me. To this day, I will not attend a funeral because a coffin has the same effect. It was so real that both my parents elected to have cremation because they knew I would not attend their viewing.

Billy Hughes, DUSTOFF Medic, 1964–65



Binh Gia, Vietnam, February 1965.



Shorttimer's Party at Ocean Bar, Saigon, April 1964.

Editor's Note: DUSTOFF 90 disappeared while on a night mission on 12 February 1968 near Ban Me Thout, Vietnam. The UH-1H (67-17027) was found intact in 1970. No trace of the crew was ever found. The crew and the location of their names on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., are as follows:

1LT Jerry Roe (Aircraft Commander)	Panel 39E Line 12
CW2 Alan Gunn (Pilot)	Panel 39E Line 6
SP5 Harry Brown (Medic)	Panel 39E Line 2
SP4 Wade Groth (Crew Chief)	Panel 39E Line 5

Below is a letter received by the DUSTOFF Association regarding remembrance of that crew.

February 12, 2002

Hi 50th Med guys and friends,

I was a medic with the 50th Med Det from September 1967 to October 1968. We deployed from Fort Polk, Louisiana, on October 2, 1967, and went to Tuy Hoa, north of Nha Trang. We were there until May 1968 when we were moved to Hue-Phu Bai, north of Danang. Shortly thereafter, we became Eagle DUSTOFF, part of the 101st Airborne.

For the past two years I have traveled to D.C. on business every month or two. Almost every day that I'm in D.C., I visit the [Vietnam Memorial] Wall and place a poster telling about DUSTOFF 90 and our missing crew.

Five years ago I began searching for all the guys in the 50th. I found 45 of them during the first two years. The first question all of them asked was, "Do you know what happened to our missing crew." Of course, none of us know. We had our first reunion in San Antonio during the DUSTOFF Reunion, February 17–20, 2000. Twenty-five guys attended that very emotional gathering.

Memorial Day weekend (2001), we had our second reunion in Washington, D.C. On that Saturday we placed a large poster and wreath honoring DUSTOFF 90 and crew at the Wall.

Recently, Michelle Yeatman e-mailed me about her college English assignment. I was very moved that others were interested in our missing crew. I salute Leigh Hancock, the English professor at Germanna Community College, for her wisdom in assigning students a project they can not only learn from, but that may very well become a part of them for their entire life. Michelle and I made plans to meet in D.C. on my next trip and visit the Wall to place the poster together. We did that on February 9, 2002.

After placing the poster, we walked around the Wall and the other Vietnam Memorial statues. We watched people stop and read the story about DUSTOFF 90 and crew. Later that afternoon, we met with Leigh Hancock and told her of our day at the Wall. Now I have two new friends for the rest of my life.

Neal A. Stanley
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I'm Michelle Yeatman, and I live in northern Virginia. I was assigned a research project on Jerry Lee Roe by a wise college professor who holds those listed MIA/POW close to her heart. In my research I came across Jerry's first cousin (Sandy) who led me to Neal Stanley. I knew very little about the Vietnam War; however, through Sandy and Neal, I feel as if I was able to bring Jerry Roe alive for a class of 20-some students ranging from 17 to 50+ years of age. Jerry Lee Roe's flight school picture is the screensaver on my computer, and not a day goes by that I don't think of him and all the other wonderful souls who did not return from Vietnam.

Michelle Yeatman
Spotsylvania, VA



Neal Stanley and Michelle Yeatman at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Early Mission in the Mekong River Delta

*The following is from notes transcribed from a 12 April 1964 Mission involving
ILT John B. Givhan, pilot, and CPT James W. Ralph, DUSTOFF flight surgeon.*

John Givhan: I was flying a CH-21C ("Shawnee" or "Flying Banana") helicopter for a combat assault mission way down in the Delta. I was in the right seat (aircraft commander). Lt. Robert "Bo" Thompson, was in the left seat (pilot). We had gone into a landing zone and let troops off. We went in flying contour because we were drawing heavy fire in the LZ.

On the way back out, at about 400 feet, a round or rounds, came through the cockpit—basically blasting through the calf of my right leg. I immediately lost a lot of blood. I remember taking my belt off to make a tourniquet and tied it around my leg. I didn't have the strength to do anything and I was dragged out of the cockpit by either the crew chief or gunner.

I remember vividly, in an H-21 that if your head is toward the rear of the helicopter, your head is downhill from your body. I looked out of my right eye and saw a stream of blood flowing past my eye and I thought then that I'm in a bunch of trouble. I don't remember much after that until the helicopter actually made contact with the ground.

I later learned that Bo Thompson had been wounded by shrapnel in one of his arms and had to "crash land" the helicopter. At least no one was hurt in that landing, which was in a rice paddy somewhere near where we drew the fire.

The first distinct thing I remember was Bo leaning over me as they were taking me off the H-21, and he was saying, "John, you're going to make it." And I believed him; I know that had something to do with me living. I don't remember being put on another helicopter, but I do remember someone saying they were going to give me a morphine syrette. They gave me two, but that did not stop the pain, which was unbearable.

I don't remember much until I was off-loaded from what I believe was a UH-1 (Huey) helicopter at Can Tho and the sunlight hitting me in the eyes and the heat and the shock as well. And I remember someone holding an umbrella over me to shield me from the sun. At this point I came in contact with Doc Ralph. Doc later told me there were four or five things that happened that were "miracles" that had to do with me living—any one of which *not* happening could have made the difference between life and death.

"Doc" Ralph: I arrived in Vietnam in October 1963. The coup to overthrow Ngo Dinh Diem, who was a bit of a dictator, occurred on November 1st. After the coup, I was introduced to some Vietnamese generals by Dr. Van Van Cua, who was the senior medical officer for the Vietnamese paratroopers, later Division Surgeon for the Vietnamese Airborne Division, and eventually mayor of Saigon.

Bac Si (Doctor) Cua, took me to a victory party that the Vietnamese generals who had staged the coup were throwing. Two of the Vietnamese generals I met were Brigadier

General Lam Van Phat, commander of the Vietnamese 7th Division and later Minister of the Interior, and Major General Cao Van Vien, commander of the Airborne Division and eventually Chief of Staff of the Vietnamese Armed Forces. I also met the flamboyant Marshall Nguyen Cao Ky, commander of the Vietnamese Air Force.

I had already flown a number of combat medical evacuation missions by that time, mostly for wounded Vietnamese soldiers. I was very much involved in the Medevac business and realized that the usual process of flying wounded into Tan Son Nhut airfield and then transporting them by ground ambulance for a one- to two-hour trip through downtown Saigon to the old Metropole Hotel (which had become the U.S. Naval Hospital in the Cholon section of downtown Saigon) was a ridiculous waste of time that could be fatal to the seriously wounded.

There was a police soccer field in downtown Cholon that could accommodate a UH-1B Medevac helicopter bringing in wounded. I thought this would be the best landing site, so I asked the Vietnamese generals if this would be possible, and they said yes; Bac Si Cua had told them of my involvement with medevac missions to rescue Vietnamese wounded.

There had been a policy under Diem that there could be no aircraft flights over the city of Saigon, including Cholon, because he was afraid of coup attempts and attacks by rebel aircraft against the Presidential Palace. One coup against Diem a few years previously had been essentially a success, but he had double-crossed the coup leaders, and he knew there would be no deals the next time. But Diem was no longer in the picture and the Vietnamese generals agreed it was a good idea to use the Cholon police soccer field to take our wounded directly to the hospital by helicopter.

I presented this proposal to the office of the J-5 at MACV headquarters, and an American colonel said, "No, it can't be done because the Vietnamese won't allow it." I then took it to the Support Group, which later became U.S. Army Support Command and eventually U.S. Army Vietnam (USARV), headquarters. Brig. General Joseph W. Stilwell, Jr. (son of Gen. "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell of World War II China-Burma-India theater fame; we called the son "Cider Joe"), was the commanding general at the time, and I was his "family Doc." General Stilwell thought it was a good idea.

Some of the Support Group colonels said it was not a good idea and got after me from taking it to MACV and even more so for talking to the Vietnamese in the first place. I was told by a colonel, who later became a major general, that we could not fly our wounded directly to the Cholon soccer field, but if Gen. Stilwell got hit, we should fly him directly to Cholon. We could not do it for anyone else because that would be against regulations.

I discussed this with Captain Paul Bloomquist, medevac

pilot. He and I and an Air Force officer from Paris Radar Control set up a protocol for flying medevac helicopters directly into Cholon. Bloomquist was with the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance), commanded by Major Charles Kelly, who laid the groundwork for what helicopter medevac became in Vietnam.

The 57th medics were the first helicopter ambulance unit in Vietnam and the first to use the call sign "Dust Off," which is still used by medevac units around the world. I was the 57th Medic's flight surgeon and the first flight surgeon to fly routinely with the 57th. Bloomquist was the Executive Officer of the 57th at that time.

We finally got approval; the Vietnamese approved our protocol immediately, but the Americans, in typical bureaucratic fashion took a while longer. However, we got approval to go directly to the Cholon police soccer field, which was near the U.S. Naval Hospital. Gen. Stilwell said that he was recommending Bloomquist, the Air Force radar guy, and me for the Joint Service Commendation Medal when it became obvious that this protocol we developed was saving lives. We never saw the medals.

Well, this kind of set the stage for John Givhan being flown in when he got wounded. We were already using the Cholon soccer field for any severe casualties who could not tolerate the long ground ambulance ride from Tan Son Nhut airfield through downtown Saigon. All we had at Tan Son Nhut was a small U.S. Air Force Dispensary, with a few beds for non-serious patients, and two small Army outpatient dispensaries, one of which was under my command.

I was also Battalion Surgeon for the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion. John's unit, the 120th Aviation Company, was under the 145th. When John was shot, he was transferred to a UH-1B medevac chopper and flown to Can Tho, located on the south bank of the massive Mekong river. There he was initially treated briefly by another medical officer who had put a tourniquet on his leg above the knee, a clamp that clamped only skin and not the bleeding vessel, and covered the wound with a huge abdominal dressing, which obscured the view. An IV had been started.

I was tending to some other casualties at Can Tho airfield while this was going on. I then went over to check out John and he looked very bad, so I decided that I had better go with him myself on the chopper to Saigon/Cholon.

As soon as the chopper lifted off and tipped forward, I saw blood pouring down the litter (stretcher), and I realized something was wrong. I pulled off the abdominal dressing that had been wrapped around his leg and saw immediately what the problem was.

The clamp was not doing anything useful, and the military strap-type tourniquet, positioned above the knee, had been improperly placed around the condyles (bulges) of the distal femur (thigh bone) and was not compressing the bleeding vessel, the popliteal artery. So the tourniquet was not doing its job. If the tourniquet had done its job, John would have lost his leg above the knee, as the circulation would have been cut off at that point.

I had to stop the bleeding immediately, because John was about out of blood by that time. I wanted to try to save his leg, if possible, but the main objective was to stop the bleeding. As a doctor, I have this arrangement: I treat; God heals. I figured that if I could stop the bleeding, the Lord would take from there. I'm sure that John Givhan, being raised a good Southern Baptist, understands that.

I took a big wad of gauze wrap and stuffed it into the large exit wound, which was on the back of the leg just below the knee. The entrance wound was smaller and on the anterior, or front, of the leg at about the same level. The exit wound was a huge gaping hole, about as big as your fist.

I knew there was going to be more damage than I could see at the time, because high velocity bullets do severe soft tissue damage as they smash through; the faster the bullet, the more extensive the damage. I thought John had been hit by a .50 caliber machine gun round, but later learned it might have been a round from a 12.7 mm automatic weapon used for antiaircraft fire that the North Vietnamese had just brought into South Vietnam.

John may have had the unfortunate distinction and dubious honor of being the first American hit with this new weapon. Even though the round had come through the fuselage of the helicopter, it still had plenty of velocity and horsepower when it hit John's leg, causing much tissue damage and tearing out the popliteal artery that comes down behind the knee and divides into two major arteries as continues down the leg.

It was right at the bifurcation or division that the bullet did its thing. The artery had been completely torn through and had retracted back into the shredded muscle of John's leg, but I was able to stop the bleeding by packing the gauze into the wound with my hands and holding it firmly in place with my thumbs jammed as high and tightly as I could manage.

We climbed to our usual cruising altitude of about 1,000 feet, but started coming under ground fire as we headed for Saigon, usually about a one-hour flight, maybe a little longer. The pilot started to climb to higher altitude to escape the ground fire. I realized that John was going to need all the oxygen he could get due to his severe blood loss. We had no oxygen on board to give him (not normally carried on Army medevac choppers at that time).

John could not have tolerated a flight at higher altitude. He was worse than pale, he was turning gray. He was trying to die and I was not about to let him. I never had a wounded man die while under my care in Vietnam, and John Givhan was not going to be the first if I could help it! Anyway, John could not tolerate the higher altitude, so I asked the pilot, MAJ Charles L. Kelly, to stay low. Instead of flying at two or three thousand feet, we flew the entire mission hugging the ground, usually 100 feet above the deck or lower, actually hopping over rows of trees and power lines. This allowed John to have the maximum amount of oxygen available under the circumstances. It

(Continued)

was risky to fly this way, but it was definitely worth it MAJ Kelly did as much as anyone to save John's life.

We were pouring in all the IV fluids we could, we had two lines with saline and two lines with a synthetic colloidal suspension called Dextran, a plasma-expander that was supposed to simulate blood but had no oxygen-carrying capacity. We gave him whatever serum albumin we had, which wasn't very much as I had just scrounged some from a Special Forces medic earlier that day. We did not have any blood on board.

John was semiconscious part of the time at best. I would talk to him and ask questions, and he would occasionally mumble something in response, not always making sense. We gave him all the fluids we had on board and were just about to run out as we got to the Cholon soccer field. We had called ahead for blood, and they ran that in through all four IV lines as soon as we landed.

I'm not sure how much blood John lost, but they poured a lot in him at the Naval Hospital. I was told later that the cockpit of John's H-21 helicopter was covered with blood, on the windshield and instruments, everywhere, and Bo Thompson had to wipe off the windshield to see enough to fly.

The gauze packing got completely soaked and sort of collapsed into the wound, so I had to push another one in on top of it. I held the packing tightly in place the entire time except for brief periods when the medic would hold the packing to give my thumbs a rest. Those breaks had to be very brief because the medic was not able to hold tightly enough to stop the bleeding completely. During those brief breaks I would check the IV lines, check for pulse, as I was unable to register any blood pressure at all, even by palpation. I even checked his eyes for papillary reflexes a few times to be sure he was still alive, and then went back to holding the packing myself.

Direct pressure is often the most effective way to control bleeding. I learned that in the Boy Scouts, long before I ever went to medical school. John Givhan came the closest to dying of anyone I treated the entire time I was in Vietnam.

We had radioed ahead for O negative type blood to be ready for John. The hospital did have the universal donor type, O negative. John's dog tags said his type was O positive, but I did not want to take a chance that the dog tags were wrong. We could not take time to go through the usual typing and cross-matching of the blood, as would be expected in a more routine situation. John is O positive, so he had no problem with the transfusions. Actually, we asked for the ambulance that met us to have four units of blood, and we hooked blood up to each of the four IV lines in the ambulance.

I jumped into the ambulance with John, still holding his packing, which I did not release until we were in the operating room of the Naval Hospital and the surgeon could take over. We had made it! The Lord was with us! Now I could relax, but 1LT John B. Givhan had much more to go through that night.

There are several points that need emphasizing: for one thing, we were able to use the Cholon soccer field to fly John directly to the hospital. If we had to land at Tan Son Nhut outside Saigon and use a ground ambulance through evening rush hour, he would not have made it to the hospital alive. He did not have the extra one or two hours it would have taken for ground transport.

One ironic thing was that there was another flight surgeon stationed at Can Tho, whom I eventually replaced (after I left the 145th, I went to the 8th Field Hospital in Nha Trang for a month and then down to Can Tho), and there was a U.S. Public Health Service surgical team working at the Can Tho civilian hospital during the time John was wounded. One of the American doctors was a vascular surgeon who could have taken care of John at Can Tho and possibly could have saved John from amputation. The Can Tho flight surgeon did not tell us about the American surgical team, although he knew they were there at the time. One problem with military medicine in Vietnam was the failure to communicate and share resources; however, this was not unique to Vietnam.

Other problems were the improper initial treatment by the first doctor (who was also stationed at Tan Son Nhut) who saw John and tried the tourniquet, which turned out to be useless due to improper placement, and a tourniquet was not the correct method of hemostasis (stopping bleeding) in John's particular case. The improperly placed clamp was another problem. With the artery having retracted, clamping was not really an option in John's case. The large abdominal pad had covered the wound, so it was impossible to determine the real extent of the damage. These were some of the things that could have contributed to John Givhan's premature demise.

The skilled flying of the 57th Medics pilots and the aircraft commander agreeing to fly at treetop level was a definite plus for John. Also, the pilots had flown into Cholon several times before and knew the most direct route. The Paris Control protocol worked perfectly for John. Things did go wrong and other things could have gone wrong for John. It seemed as if it was his time to die, but I got in the way. I've told him that the Lord just did not want him yet because he was too mean and needed many more years to mellow out before the Lord would put up with him. Besides, Martha needed a husband, and John A. and Endsley needed a Daddy, so it worked out okay all the way around. So you can blame John's presence in part to me and the 57th Medics DUSTOFF team.

One more problem facing John was that the Navy doctors thought John's leg was getting good blood flow after they repaired the damage (as much as they could under the circumstances) because his leg was warm. Unfortunately, this was not the case. John was transferred to Clark Air Base in the Philippines, where it was discovered that the warmth in John's lower leg was not from good blood supply, but was from tissue dying and getting infected. The surgeons at Clark did a prompt below-the-knee, or B-K, amputation of John's right lower leg. John told me later

that he noticed a tremendous improvement in the way he felt after the infected lower leg was amputated; toxins from the dead tissue were making him very ill.

John: Last summer I ran into retired COL James B. Guthrie at the Selma Country Club at a golf tournament. He didn't know me at the time, but he heard on 12 April 1964 that a lieutenant from Selma has been wounded. Later he heard that it was a LT Givhan, and he knew of the Givhan family from the Selma area.

He went to the helicopter the next day or so, it having been sling-loaded back to Tan Son Nhut. He said it had 200 bullet holes in it, and the cockpit and cargo compartment were both coated with blood. The area of the cargo compartment where I had been lying was covered with blood "sludge"; I believe that's the word he used. That is certainly compatible with what I recall.

I remember going into that landing zone. We, the 120th Aviation Co., had ferried Vietnamese troops that morning to way down deep in the Delta, almost to the southern tip of Vietnam, far south of our usual area of operations.

We had never flown in that area before. This was because the 114th Aviation Co., stationed at Vinh Long, had an aircraft accident in which a UH-1B Huey helicopter had the tail boom separate in midair, killing everyone onboard as it crashed into the Mekong River. All the Hueys were grounded so the tail boom attachments could be checked. Also, ironically, Doc Ralph had signed the death certificates of that aircrew when their bodies were brought to Tan Son Nhut for identification.

That morning we ferried Vietnamese troops from Can Tho to an area near Ca Mau, to the landing zone where the fire fight was. We went to a little airstrip known as Ca Mau, deep south in the Delta and known to all aviators as bad,

bad country, no man's land. I know I had a sense of foreboding as we sat there on the airstrip, eating some C-rations before we went on the actual mission I was wounded on, because we were told we were going in "contour." We also had a 20- to 25-knot wind because we on the peninsula of the lower south coast of Vietnam. Both pilots (Bo and myself) had to fight the controls going into the landing zone flying contour because of the crosswind. We had a terrific crosswind.

I remember when we got to about 600 yards from the LZ (landing zone), we started drawing heavy fire from enemy ground units behind rice paddy dikes. I saw something I never had seen before: Viet Cong soldiers running in the open toward us firing automatic weapons at us point blank. Then our gunners firing point blank back at them—so I knew it was bad news. I really don't know why, when we left the LZ, we were ordered to climb out to altitude. I thought that when we got to 400 feet altitude, we would make it. I was watching the altimeter and it was exactly at 400 feet that those rounds came through that hit me in the right leg.

Another interesting story: I always wore my helmet with sunglasses; I never used the visor (contrary to Doc Ralph's advice!), while Bo Thompson in the left seat always used his tinted visor and never wore sunglasses. When we got hit, Bo yelled over the intercom, "I'm blind!" I looked over at Bo and there was meat, blood, and flesh all over his visor—from my leg, obviously. I flipped his visor up and then he could see. I don't remember much after that except that it really *hurts* when you get shot! It's not like a John Wayne movie.

—DUSTOFFer—

2001 LTG Ellis D. Parker Award Winner

Received a note from the 52nd Medical Battalion concerning this prestigious award and its most recent recipients.

The best Aviation Combat Service Support Battalion in the U.S. Army is the only medical evacuation battalion in United forces, Korea, and Eighth Army. The 52nd Medical Evacuation Battalion, 18th Medical Command, Yongsan, Korea, is the 2001 winner of the LTG Ellis D. Parker Aviation Unit Award in the Combat Service Support category.

The organization is part of the 18th Medical command and is comprised of four companies and one detachment. Soldiers of the 52nd Medical Battalion are stationed at Camp Page, Camp Humphreys, and Yongsan, with field locations at Camp Walker and Camp Casey. The battalion's mission is to provide ground and aeromedical evacuation support and services in support of Eighth Army and United States forces, Korea, operations. The 52nd Medical Evacuation Battalion provides day-to-day, real-world medical evacuation support everywhere on the southern Korean Peninsula. Aircraft and crews, located at four separate locations, provide

responsive aeromedical evacuation support for every range, maneuver area, live-fire gunnery, and training exercise conducted by U.S. Forces. During FY 2001, the command evacuated more than 346 U.S. soldiers by air and 2,703 soldiers by ground. In addition to transporting patients, the ambulances and aircraft often deliver critically needed medical supplies or blood to units in need. This method of delivery is used when time is critical and transport is not available. The battalion ties its wartime mission to the armistice mission and is able to sustain a high level of readiness in constant vigil of any hostile actions.

The LTG Ellis D. Parker award recognizes excellence in aviation units based on achievements in the areas of leadership, safety, training, and maintenance. The award is a Department of the Army award given annually since 1993.

—DUSTOFFer—

Looking Beyond

A Fall 2001 edition of Retired Officer magazine, had a notable article written by DUSTOFFer Pat Brady. The foreword is from the editorial staff of the publication.

Sometimes we better appreciate events when viewing them through the eyes of others. With this thought in mind, join us on a journey to a distant land and revisit a controversial era of American history. Major General Patrick Brady leads our excursion. This story collects his observations and notes from two visits to Vietnam. Share his insights as he meets a former enemy, visits old battlefields, and encounters everyday Vietnamese people.

In two tours in Vietnam, Brady flew some 3,000 missions and rescued more than 5,000 wounded civilians and soldiers, enemy as well as friendly. He is identified in *The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War* and other books as the top helicopter pilot from the Vietnam War. Brady received the Medal of Honor on October 9, 1969, for a series of missions on January 6, 1968, that began before sunrise and ended after dark, during which he used three helicopters because of enemy fire and mine fields to rescue 51 wounded soldiers. Brady is one of only a handful of soldiers to receive both the Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second-highest military award.

Twenty-seven years after his Medal of Honor action, Brady returned to Vietnam on behalf of retired Army General William Westmoreland. This visit would inspire Brady to return in 1998 with his wife.

April 1995: *He once said, "Every minute hundreds of thousands of people die all over the world. The life or death of a hundred, a thousand, or of tens of thousands of human beings, even if they are our own compatriots, represents really very little." He killed benefactors and foes alike. The man who gave him his first job was an early victim. Later, his father-in-law would be executed by the communists, along with some 10,000 noncommunist rivals.*

His first wife died under the French in Hoa Lo prison, later called the "Hanoi Hilton." The French guillotined his sister-in-law and killed his daughter, his father, and his two sisters. They mocked his military rank by putting it in quotation marks. Later they would call him the "snow-covered volcano" in recognition of a quiet demeanor covering a raging fanaticism that showered immeasurable chaos on them.

He was an ex-convict at age 14 who would join with an ex-cook, and together they would kill many multiples of tens of thousands of their compatriots and enemies and rattle this planet's cage. Today, this ex-cook, Ho Chi Minh, is worshipped as a god by his people. The ex-convict is recognized by many alongside the likes of Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Army General Douglas MacArthur as one of the great military captains in history. He was a master of guerrilla warfare, and early in my career we were encouraged to study his works.

I watched intently as General Vo Nguyen Giap signed my 35-year-old copy of his book, People's War People's

Army. His hair now really was snow-covered, but the volcano inside was dormant. He was bright and lively with smooth skin and large hooded eyes. He looked much younger than his 83 years and reminded me of an oriental leprechaun.

It was the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the communist takeover of Vietnam in 1975, and I was there on behalf of retired Army General William Westmoreland to arrange a filmed documentary between "Westy" and Giap. We had been told that Giap would go on film and declare (the Tet Offensive) a devastating defeat for his side. That, plus the historical significance of such a meeting, promised for a great documentary and convinced me to go, even though I had a negative itch about ever returning.

The Parade: *My meeting with Giap was facilitated by a mysterious lady known as Madame K. She arranged for me to be in the grandstand with the diplomatic corps at the parade celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the communist takeover. She told me I was the only American seated there. As we waited, my neighbors speculated on the nature of the parade. They said past parades had been hard on the vanquished Americans but thought that would not be the case this time because of the current effort to establish favorable trade conditions with us. Earlier, Giap used these negotiations as an excuse to abort the meeting with Westy.*

Except for the goose-stepping military, a sight that always sent chills up my spine, and a replica of a Russian T54 tank No. 843, which broke into the embassy grounds, the parade was far from warlike. I noticed one motorcycle with Old Glory on the bumper, and Mickey Mouse paraded along with a group of nuns and many beautiful ladies and children. I saw a lot of used American equipment and noticed that the troops stood in stifling heat for more than three hours, and not one dropped.

Across from the parade I could see the cathedral on JFK Square where I worshipped 30 years before, and I recalled a Vietnam I once knew better than any terrain on earth. I decided then to return and see this beautiful land from grunt level.

June 1998: *On my return trip I joined a group consisting mostly of Army aviators and their wives and a Vietnam Gold Star wife. She was looking for closure by visiting the spot where her husband died in a helicopter crash. Her "map" was a photo of a hillside with an outcropping of rocks. Those of us who knew the terrain saw little hope for her mission.*

Our first stop was Hong Kong. It was my first trip there since the Chinese communist takeover. Their presence was clearly evident. The workers at the airport were immaculately uniformed, but the escalator didn't work. And they

were out of single-malt Scotch in the duty-free store, a transgression no capitalist country would suffer.

Hanoi: *As I looked down on our approach to Hanoi, I recalled many earlier flights where the face of the land was pocked alternately by bomb craters and grave mounds. The terrain around Hanoi still was scarred, like a beautiful woman with severe acne.*

The guide briefed us on the drive from the airport into Hanoi. He said some of the land went for \$1,000 to \$1,500 per square meter. When did the communist party allow property ownership, we asked. Our guide, a communist, proudly described the doi moi (renovation) program that was founded during the severe hunger of 1985. It promoted land reform and farmer autonomy, reduced state intervention in business, and opened the country to foreign investment. Vladimir Lenin went through a similar famine in Russia and called his reforms the New Economic Policy. Americans call it free enterprise. We kidded our guide that the doi moi founder would make an excellent capitalist.

Hanoi was a dark town, unlike Saigon, or Ho Chi Minh City, which was light and lively. The hotels were frugal but comfortable—at least when the air conditioners worked. The food was adequate to good but overall did not match the great French-influenced cuisine of the war years.

Going to church: *I was anxious to go to church and see how the communist rejection of God affected the people's faith. Officials claimed to be atheists but said all people enjoyed freedom of religion. We had some trouble finding a church. The hotel clerks could not, or would not, direct us, even though there was one barely around the corner. It seemed they did not want to appear knowledgeable in such matters.*

Surprisingly, the church was crowded. I noticed how well-dressed everyone was and was embarrassed to be in shorts. As we knelt down, my wife whispered that all the women were together across the aisle. She was not amused when I replied, "No, not all of them." She ordered me up and to the rear.

The mass was colorful, and the entire congregation sang beautifully. At the sign of peace, there was no touching, only a polite bow or nod of the head. One guy did not bow back to me, choosing instead to glare. Perhaps I reminded him of a bomb that had landed near him in the past. Another man bowed but with what seemed to be a condescending twinkle in his eye, as if to say, "We kicked your butt, but you are welcome." I felt like I was at a mass some 30 years ago and enjoyed it.

A new god: *Friedrich Nietzsche said, "If we have killed God, then we must become gods to be worthy of it." The communists have tried to kill God and replace him with their dictators. A deified Ho bombarded our senses everywhere. The plaza in front of his mausoleum was packed with children waiting to see his corpse. Their demeanor and dress was as if they were waiting for first communion. The mausoleum was not unlike Lenin's in Moscow or Napoleon's*

in Paris (except Napoleon was, mercifully, covered with marble, not glass). Apparently Ho travels periodically by special train to Moscow where he enjoys a formaldehyde bath with Lenin.

At the Ho Chi Minh Museum, his statue stood outstretched majestically like a lightning rod between Heaven and Earth. Inside was a picture of Ho painted in the artist's blood. People actually bowed to his likeness. The communists spend a lot of time attacking (God as nonexistent) but see no contradiction in worshipping the spirit of Ho, which they say will live forever to inspire and lead them.

Recovery operations: *We received an excellent briefing on (U.S. efforts to recover American) remains. The Joint Task Force Full Accounting Office is just that. I would defy anyone to find an instance in the history of warfare where any nation has gone to the effort that we have on behalf of our lost ones. They actually sift the dirt and sort it with tweezers. Some of the video hit those of us with lost ones hard. Our Gold Star wife went to pieces.*

Plei Ku: *On our way to Plei Ku, I mentioned a stick buddy from flight school who had been killed at the airfield there during a communist attack. I recalled some confusion on just how he was killed. I was shocked when an aviator in the group said he could tell me exactly what happened. He had been my buddy's copilot the night he was killed. We did our best to locate and photograph the airfield, now mostly city, for his widow.*

The countryside: *The ghosts of the GI are ubiquitous. Next to his gun, the GI prized his steel pot and canteen. He cursed the weight of the helmet, but during incoming gunfire, he frantically embraced it, squeezing as much of his body as possible under its protective mantel. With his steel pot, canteen, and cup, he also could cook, bathe, and shave. Today the countryside of Vietnam is alive with the tinkle of GI canteen cups converted to bells and hung from the necks of cows. The helmets still protect; they are everywhere perched on the top of haystacks rerouting the rain. Dog tags and Zippo lighters were for sale all over. Someday someone will collect and perpetuate the incredible, albeit raw, poetry the GI inscribed on his Zippo lighter. It was hard not to wonder what happened to the owners of these relics.*

Untruths: *Westy's former home is an atrocities museum, and all museums (in Vietnam) were monuments to untruths. Where there is no accountability to the people, there is no accounting for what they are told. We found photos of "heroic" North Vietnamese females "capturing" American pilots next to photos of American females protesting the war. GIs were shown "praying to God to escape death," which in reality was a field mass. President Ford was shown "planning a major atrocity," but the man shown wasn't Gerald Ford. The most disturbing sight for me was a case full of American flight helmets. It reminded me of the human skulls*

(Continued)

I saw stacked in the basement of a museum on the French battlefield in Verdun.

Robert McNamara's book, a self-serving apology for Vietnam, was under glass in a place of honor. Later we would drive down Nguyen Van Troi Street, named for the Viet Cong martyr who once tried to kill McNamara. Communist sympathizers Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden would name their son after Troi in honor of Troi's effort to kill McNamara. Judging from the comments on our bus, we may at last have found a point of agreement between many GIs and "Hanoi Jane."

Remembering the GI: *We visited battlefields from the DMZ to Saigon, many of which are marked with monuments to our "defeats" and the glorious "victories" of communism. Vietnam may be the only place we ever fought where there are no memorials to the GI. I vowed then to try and change this. Communism will someday be gone, but even today we could build a memorial to the GIs' incredible medical and humanitarian effort there, one that cared for enemies and allies equally. Such a memorial would add to the healing and unifying of our two people.*

The people: *You have to love these hardworking, cheerful, and amazingly honest people, even those who had once tried to kill you. At Plei Me we met a friendly, rugged chap who had fought the French at Dien Bien Phu and walked the Ho Chi Minh Trail many times, surviving the fiercest combat (against) us only to set off a mine while farming in peace—and blow off an arm and a leg.*

Vietnam has some of the most beautiful and charming young panhandlers in the world. They remind me of my own personal flower girl whom I dearly loved and would have adopted but for my wife reminding me of our (own) five children. The cyclo drivers are still colorful. They would ask where I was from and then declare they had a daddy about my age in that state. It raised my wife's eyebrows and never helped with the tip. In one village a young girl threw a rock through the window of a tour bus. The police stood down the entire village until they found her and then raised enough money to pay for the window. One wife on our tour left \$400 out in her room, which was gone when she returned. The maid had left her money at the front desk.

The children, almost without exception, preferred the United States to all other countries. Their affection clearly had been passed down from their parents and is a tribute to the compassion and generosity of the American GI. One young man spoke glowingly about his favorite American president, Ben Franklin. When I challenged his facts, he immediately pulled out a \$100 bill. Sure enough, there was old Ben. I smiled but wondered where in the hell he got a \$100 bill.

A parting vision: *On our last night we were entertained by a retired North Vietnamese colonel who also was a well-known artist. He had walked the Ho Chi Minh Trail twice making sketches along the way. Through his work I saw for*

first time the famous lifeline of the communist victory. One picture he showed with pride disturbed me. It was a Trojan horse inside a Buddhist temple – only the temple was really an ammo factory.

Going home: *I am pleased I returned. My wife learned about a Vietnam much different from the media descriptions. And our Gold Star wife found the site of her husband's death. Through speculation, luck, and the knowledge of our pilots we settled on a pass south of Chu Lai, and she found peace. We must have approached in the exact angle of the photo because we all saw the rocks at about the same time and there was no doubt we were there.*

I saw many of the battlefields and mine fields I flew into as a Dustoff pilot, including some I visited on the day of my Medal of Honor action. It was an emotional experience as I remembered the horrors of communism, the thrill of saving lives, and the enduring inspiration I found in the courage of the GI.

The Vietnam War is the most unselfish war we ever fought, but our work is not quite finished. Our efforts there rang the death knell of communism—they just don't know what to do with the corpse.

For the Future: President George W. Bush recently appointed Brady to the American Battle Monuments Commission. In this capacity, Brady intends to work toward establishing a monument to honor the medical and humanitarian services provided to all citizens of Vietnam by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War.

—DUSTOFFer—



DUSTOFF Association Membership Report

Honorary Life Members	14
Life Members	821
Current Annual Members	134
Units	70
Corporations	8
Inactive	663
Other	2
Total	1,713

More from a DUSTOFF Pioneer

An article written by Arthur Veysey, of the Chicago Tribune Press Service during World War II, has some interesting information and commentary, featuring LT Louis Carle, who flew some of the first helicopter ambulance missions.

With the 112th Cavalry in Luzon Mountains, June 20—For the first time in the Philippines campaign, a helicopter today rescued an injured American soldier and evacuated twelve more from a first-aid station in this mountain wilderness.

LT Louis Carle, Carthage, Illinois, lowered his helicopter to the bed of a river at the bottom of a 1,200-foot ravine to pick up a soldier shot while on patrol. Thirty minutes later, Carle parked his plane on the lawn in front of a hospital in Manila. Doctors said the soldier would have died within three hours except for early treatment.

Carle then returned to the mountains, set his plane down atop a knife-edged ridge where this dismounted cavalry force has set up a first-aid station and, one by one, began evacuating men who have lain there for a week and more.

Except for the helicopter, this force can be reached only by a three-day hike. Cavalry men, toting everything on their backs, killed 169 Japs when they fought their way here, and every day patrols working within a mile or two of the camp kill at least 40 enemy troops.

Rescue GI in Gorge: Only the day before LT Carle flew his helicopter into a gorge to rescue a soldier. A Jap major

general was killed within 100 feet of the spot Carle used as a landing field.

COL Joe Dawson, commander of the 5th Air Service Area Command, to which Carle and his helicopter are attached for ferrying between Nichols Field and repair ships in Mamila Bay, pointed out that, to reach the cavalry men, Carle had to risk not only storms, but also fire from Japs. So far the helicopter has been able to dodge storms and has not drawn Jap fire.

It's a Shaky Job: Carle sets his helicopter down as easily as a mother puts her babe in a cradle. To prepare his landing field, cavalry men merely cut a 15-foot square in the six-foot-high grass.

To persons accustomed to riding in a plane with wings and a propeller, a trip in a machine that goes not only straight up and down but also backwards and sideways is strange.

Driving the "eggbeater" is hard work. The control stick shakes like a jackhammer, and the pilot must hold it tightly at all times. Should he relax for even a minute, the plane falls out of control. Pilots of regular planes say it's easy to identify a helicopter pilot—he has a permanent case of the shakes.

—DUSTOFFer—



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A Brief Overview of U.S. Helicopter Combat Aeromedevac Evolution

by John Aure Buesseler, M.D., M.S.B.A. *

Almost overlooked by the public as one of the lessons learned from the Vietnam Conflict, is the remarkable evolution of helicopter evacuation. Known as Aeromedevac, the system that evolved in that conflict reduced battlefield fatalities by as much as 50% from that experienced in the Korea Conflict and in World War II. Although medical science and technology had advanced, they alone could not account for the marked reduction in combat fatalities. The greatest factor in this reduction was helicopter aeromedevac.¹

America's involvement in the Vietnam Conflict came at a time when aviation science and technology had produced a reliable helicopter capable of essentially vertical takeoffs and landings amidst harsh climates while carrying substantial loads. The integration of this new capability into the evacuation of the sick and wounded in the Vietnam Conflict proved to be a process of blending field expediencies with operational necessities in gradually arriving at a highly refined and outstandingly successful organizational system of Aeromedevac.¹

Based largely on operational experience gained in the Korea Conflict,¹ and to a lesser but equally courageous extent in World War II, the aeromedevac system in Vietnam evolved into a complex *modus operandi* able to transport critically wounded servicemen from an ongoing battle to a definitive care facility frequently within as little as twenty minutes¹—even before dressings could be applied to the wounds.

World War II: The first helicopter aeromedevac operations occurred in WW II. After Igor I. Sikorsky developed the aerodynamically successful true helicopter in 1930, the U.S. Army in 1942 obtained the first 200 Sikorsky YR-4 helicopters.² It fell to U.S. Army Air Force Lieutenant Carter Harman, flying a YR-4, to be the pilot of "the first combat helicopter rescue...." Harman, flying in support of British General Orde C. Wingate's Commandos in Burma on 25 and 26 April 1944, rescued four British soldiers, three of them wounded, from behind Japanese lines. Taxing his YR-4 to its performance limits, Harman made four flights to the site to complete the rescue. Carter Harman subsequently went on to rescue a total of 18 wounded soldiers. With a more powerful engine and a completely redesigned fuselage, the Sikorsky YR-6A was flight tested in October 1943. In 1944–45, 219 YR-6As were produced by Nash-Kelvinator Corporation.³

In an article titled "Ivory Soap" by Fred M. Duncan in the *Dustoff* magazine, he reports on "... officially never-told declassified stories from the vaults of historical files discovered fifty-five years after World War II." Duncan was a

member of a ship's crew in a fleet of twenty-four Army Transportation Corps aircraft repair ships collectively identified only by the nickname Project Ivory Soap. Six Liberty ships in the fleet each contained machine shops, repair shops, and a 40- by 72-foot landing pad for the two YR-4B and YR-6A helicopters it carried, even though "A March 1943 classified Navy report states '... the U.S. Navy has tested the R-4 and does not consider this machine operational for shipboard use'."⁴

Nevertheless, the YR-4Bs and YR-6As were used successfully to carry repair and replacement parts between the shore-based U.S. Army Air Force aircraft and the seaborne machine and repair shops of the Ivory Soap fleet. However, from June 16 through 29, in response to a request from LTC Clyde Grant, commander 112th Cavalry Regimental Combat Team in Luzon, Philippines, five of the helicopter pilots flew a series of rescue missions that extracted a total of seventy wounded soldiers. Although none of the pilots had training in combat tactics, they flew under enemy fire to rescue the wounded soldiers. Second LT Louis A. Carle



Original 57th DUSTOFF pilots in 1965. Front (L-R): Ed Taylor, John Dean, Bill Campbell, Jim Truscott, Tom Milner, John Kamenar; Top: Mike Trader, Tom Thomas, Alex Ortolano

flew the first mission. First LT John R. Noll, 1LT Robert W. Cowgill, 2LT Harold Green, and 1LT James H. Brown joined in the rescue operation and in effect heralded the dawn of the Vietnam era Dustoff.⁴

Korea Conflict: Although introduced at the close of World War II, the Korea Conflict saw the introduction en masse of the new form of technology: helicopters.⁵ During the Korea Conflict with the helicopter still in its early stages of development, the Bell H-13 and Hiller H-23 were used extensively in aeromedevac missions. Col. Robert M. Hall, MC, USA (Ret.), in his article titled *Treatment of the Wounded at Chipyong-ni*, tells of his experiences as a surgeon in the midst of that battle and of the essential service rendered by helicopter aeromedevac in extracting wounded soldiers from the United Nation forces that were completely surrounded by the Chinese and North Korean enemy. Hall reported that by 15 February 1951, more than 200 patients had accumulated during the siege battle and the only means of evacuating them

was by vertical-lift aircraft. He stated that the helicopters had such limited range that they had to be refueled within the battle site so they could fly the patients out to an Army hospital. The patients were carried one or two at a time externally, on litters strapped to metal racks welded to the helicopter skids. Hall notes that CPT Joseph Bowler was one of the pilots flying out wounded from Chipyong-ni and who became one of the legendary helicopter medevac pilots of the Korea Conflict.⁶ (Dr. Hall's article is well worth reading by anyone with an interest in the medical history of the Korea Conflict.)

It was in the Korea Conflict that LT (later COL) Byron P. Howlett, MSC, USA, developed and honed his skills as a pilot with the 1st Helicopter Ambulance Company. Flying solo in an H-13 with few instruments, often at night, with no weather service or escort flight, every mission was accomplished despite the odds. The payoff was experience, and the number of patients evacuated reached 20,000 during his tour with the 1st Helicopter Ambulance Company.⁷

Vietnam Conflict: America's involvement in Southeast Asia following the Korea Conflict offered a heavy challenge to the courageous group of individuals who became known by the call sign of DUSTOFF.¹ An excellent example of this group is CPT John Temperelli, Jr., MSC, USA, Commander of the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance), who, with five Bell UH-1A Iroquois helicopters, in April 1962 was the first to arrive in South Vietnam in support of the newly arrived U.S. Army Eighth Field Hospital.^{7,8} The UH-1A, Utility Helicopter Series One "Huey," with a gas turbine engine, was designed in 1958 to be an air ambulance, and 200 were manufactured.²

In March 1963, UH-1B arrived in Vietnam, and with a speed of 90 miles an hour and a load of 4,600 pounds, represented a significant improvement over the UH-1A model.^{9,10} With only five UH-1B air ambulances to cover all of South Vietnam, Major Lloyd Spencer (Temperelli's replacement) dispersed them to cover II, III, and IV Corps, leaving the I Corps to be covered by the U.S. Marine Corps with its Sikorsky CH-34s.⁵ An important difference between the U.S. Army and the Marine Corps' approach to helicopter medical evacuation in Vietnam lay in the latter's decision not to create dedicated aeromedical evacuation units but to assign such duty on rotation to general duty helicopters and their crews.¹

One problem continually faced by Army aeromedevac units was the desperate shortage of qualified personnel as a result of the theater-wide, one-year rotation policy for military personnel.⁵ In addition, the required four to six hours of maintenance for each one hour of flight time made the location and preservation of skilled maintenance crews a critical factor.⁸ A third echelon maintenance detachment in support of the 498th Medical Company (Helicopter Ambulance) experienced in one year a 170% turnover in personnel.¹

The American effort in support of the Vietnam involvement resulted in a rapid development of improved models of the "Huey" helicopter in the form of the UH-1D and the

UH-1H with the more powerful Avco Corporation T-53-L-13 turboshaft engine replacing the Kaman HH 43 engine of the UH-1D, enabling the helicopter ambulance with added hoist equipment to be fully capable of performing its required missions over the jungle and mountainous terrain of Vietnam. The UH-1H had a maximum speed of 125 mph and a range of 318 miles.¹⁰ By the close of the Vietnam Conflict in April 1975, more than 500,000 casualties were transported by DUSTOFF helicopter ambulances. Late in the Vietnam Conflict, the HH53 "Super Jolly Green Giant," flown by the U.S. Air Force Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, flew 1,200 times to rescue downed airmen.² The Center for Military History documents reportedly credits the Army helicopter ambulances in Vietnam with transporting almost 900,000 U.S. and Allied sick and wounded.¹¹

Conclusion: Flying helicopter aeromedevac missions was and is a hazardous occupation. This was particularly true in combat as the enemy increased the number and capability of its antiaircraft weaponry. It was not unusual during the Vietnam Conflict for such pilots and crews to be shot down during their year-long tour of duty, some as often as twice and a few as many as three times! It is an indication of the courage and skill of their comrades who flew to their aid that many downed DUSTOFF crews were rescued to fly again. This author noted that after the destruction of a DUSTOFF helicopter that landed on a land mine resulting in all of the crew suffering wounds, each member of that crew was back flying missions the next day. Uncommon courage is indeed a common trait of those who fly aeromedevac.¹

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(Brief, continued on page 30.)

BOBBY'S WISDOM

by Bobby McBride, former Vietnam crew chief

- There is no such thing as a small firefight.
- A free fire zone has nothing to do with economics.
- The farther you fly into the mountains, the louder the strange engine noises become.
- Medals are okay, but having your body and all of your friends in one place at the end of the day is better.
- Being shot hurts.
- "Pucker Factor" is the formal name of the equation that states the more hairy the situation is, the more of the seat cushion will be sucked up your anal sphincter. It can be expressed in its mathematical formula of S (suction) + H (height above ground) + I (interest in staying alive) + T (# of tracers coming your way).
- Thousands of Vietnam veterans earned medals for bravery every day. A few were even awarded.
- Nomex is NOT fire proof.
- There is only one rule in war: When you win, you get to make the rules.
- Living and dying can both hurt a lot.
- Do not wear underwear. It can cause crotch rot or be used as evidence against you.



Jay McGowan, former 57th DUSTOFFer who led the New York Port Authority to the 2001 Igor Sikorsky Humanitarian Award.

You Might be a Soldier (or Related to One) if . . .

- ... you have more money invested in field gear than in your car.
- ... you tell your kids to be home at 2100, and they complain that it's only nine o'clock.
- ... the allotment column of your LES has more entries than the entitlement column.
- ... no one understands the stories you tell except your friends because of all the acronyms.
- ... you can explain the Gettysburg Battlefield better than you can the directions to your quarters.
- ... your kids all know the words to *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*.
- ... your two-year-old calls everyone in battle dress Daddy or Mommy.
- ... the phone book lists your rank instead of Mr., Mrs., or Ms.
- ... your spouse hasn't unpacked the good china from the last three permanent change of station moves.
- ... your monthly basic allowance for subsistence is spent at the mess hall.
- ... you know what a mess hall is.
- ... you ruin the movie for those around you by pointing out unrealistic military scenes.
- ... you live on post so you can hear reveille every morning.
- ... your family calls you Sir or Ma'am.



DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION
Income and Expenses — Actual
Annual Closeout Report

May 1, 2001, through April 30, 2002

INCOME

Dues	\$3,432.50
Interest Income	1,081.85
Memorial Fund	3,790.00
Sales — Memorabilia/e-mail	4,153.40
Reunion Income	17,634.50
 Total Income	 \$30,092.25

Interest Income Includes:
\$162.24 earned by the checking account
\$919.61 earned by the PFCU CD and MMS

EXPENSE

Newsletter Publishing	\$3,701.19
Operating Expenses	1,637.25
Sales Expense — Memorabilia	2,786.28
Sales Taxes	199.75
Reunion Expenses	16,444.74
Memorial Expenses	3,708.20
 Total Expense	 \$28,477.41

NET INCOME (LOSS) **\$11,614.84**

Our balances in the bank/credit union are as follows (as of last statements received):

Bank of America, Military Bank Checking Account	\$10,138.74
Pentagon Federal Credit Union CD	\$11,177.23
Pentagon Federal Money Market Savings	\$10,628.19

The total money set aside in the checking account for memorials is \$3,571.80, which will cover the installation of the plaques and DUSTOFF logo and Dedication Plaque on the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame Wall at the Museum and leave a good amount of money for the preparation of next year's inductees.

Dan Gower
COL USA (Ret.)
Treasurer



The Things They Carried

They carried P-38 can openers and heat tabs, watches, and dog tags, insect repellent, gum, cigarettes, Zippo lighters, salt tablets, compress bandages, ponchos, Kool-Aid, two or three canteens of water, iodine tablets, sterno, LRRP rations, c-rations stuffed in socks. They carried M-16 rifles. They carried trip flares and Claymore mines, M-60 machine guns, M-70 grenade launchers, M-14s, Car-15s, Stoners, Swedish Ks, 66mm LAWs, shotguns, .45 caliber pistols, silencers, the sound of bullets, rockets, and choppers, and sometimes the sound of silence. They carried C-4 plastic explosives, an assortment of hand grenades, PRC-25 radios, knives, and machetes.

Some carried napalm, CBUs, and large bombs; some risked their lives to rescue others. Some escaped the fear, but dealt with the death and damage. Some made very hard decisions, and some just tried to survive.

They carried malaria, dysentery, ringworms, and leeches. They carried the land itself as it hardened in their boots. They carried stationery, pencils, and pictures of their loved ones—real and imagined. They carried love for people in the real world, and love for one another. And sometimes they disguised that love: “Don’t mean nothin’!”

They carried memories.

For the most part, they carried themselves with poise and a kind of dignity. Now and then, there were times when panic set in and people squealed, or wanted to, but couldn’t; when they twitched and made moaning sounds and covered their heads and said “Dear God,” and hugged the earth and fired their weapons blindly, and cringed and begged for the noise to stop, and went wild and made stupid promises to themselves and God and their parents, hoping not to die. They carried the traditions of the United States military, and memories and images of those who served before them. They carried grief, terror, longing, and their reputations.

They carried the soldier’s greatest fear; the embarrassment of dishonor. They crawled into tunnels, walked point, and advanced under fire, so as not to die of embarrassment. They were afraid of dying, but too afraid to show it. They carried the emotional baggage of men and women who might die at any moment. They carried the weight of the world and the weight of every free citizen of America.

They carried each other.

—DUSTOFFer—

Helicopter Association International Salutes Original DUSTOFFer

In a press release posted 7 January 2002, the Helicopter Association International announced their Salute to Excellence Award winners for the year 2001. The Salute to Excellence awards program, now in its forty-first year, recognizes outstanding achievement performed by individuals or companies in the civil helicopter industry. The winners were recognized during the HAI Salute to Excellence banquet and awards ceremony held on 16 February 2002 at the Heli-Expo 2002 in Orlando, Florida.

Among the most prominent awards announced was the Igor Sikorsky Award for Humanitarian Service. The award was given to the Police Airborne Support Unit, Port Authority for New York and New Jersey. The head of the Port

Authority Aviation Support Unit was none other than Jay McGowan, a member of the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) Original DUSTOFF during the 1964-65 period, where he also was recognized for his excellence and heroism on numerous occasions. As noted in the award citation, the latest award is in recognition of the Port Authority’s activity over the past fifty years that has demonstrated the value of civil rotorcraft to society by saving lives, protecting property, and aiding those in distress.

Clearly, Jay carried his lessons learned with DUSTOFF to the civil sector and brought honor to those endeavors as well. Jay is now retired and lives with his lovely wife, Pat, in New Jersey.

—DUSTOFFer—



421st Continues its European Mastery of the Air and Ground

Penned by Helke Hasenauer, a writer for *Soldiers' Magazine*, this article profiles the 421st Medical Battalion and its record of service and excellence, from its leadership to some of the hardest working soldiers in the US Army.

LTC Dennis Doyle, Commander of the 421st Medical Battalion in Wiesbaden, Germany, said his unit is "the best and most powerful medical battalion in the world." He has good reason to think so. Over the past eight years, the battalion has earned the coveted LTG Ellis D. Parker Award as the best Army aviation battalion in the combat service support category six times, most recently from 1997 through 2000, consecutively. Aviation battalions Army-wide compete in combat, combat support, combat service support, and Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) categories. Medical evacuation battalions compete on in the combat service support category.

The battalion's success can be attributed largely to "where we are and what we do," Doyle said. As the only medical evacuation battalion in Europe's Central Region, the 421st deployed to the Balkans when Task Force Hawk was formed in response to initial unrest in Albania and only recently returned from Kosovo. It was the battalion's longest deployment, Doyle said, with elements of the battalion and its 45 UH-60A Black Hawk helicopters and 40 ground ambulances rotating in and out over the past five years. The soldiers provided command and control of subordinate units, continuous air and ground medical evacuation support; and other support to V Corps, U.S. Army, Europe, U.S. European Command, and the Southern European Task Force.

Because weather conditions in Kosovo often keep aircraft from flying, ground evacuation is critical. "The 557th Medical Company is the only 40-ambulance ground evacuation unit in the active Army," said SFC Steven Seitz, platoon sergeant of the company's 2nd Platoon. "It has an excellent safety record, and its soldiers drove thousands of miles in Kosovo without any accidents," Doyle added.

"The forward support medical company is generally located about four hours away from the combat support hospital," said 2LT Brian Balcerak. "So we set up an ambulance exchange point at a location about two hours from the hospital, with a four-man crew, a tent, and radios."

"A physician or physician's assistant had typically seen the patients and had sent them along the evacuation route to the hospital. When they arrived at the exchange point," said LT Balcerak, "they were obviously suffering serious injuries, and our job was to get them to the combat support hospital as safely and quickly as possible."

"Medical evacuation is a harder task on the ground than in the air," Seitz said. "Our soldiers must have excellent land navigation skills. They also use the Global Positioning System, but they have to calculate distances while bouncing around on strange territory."

"Additionally, soldiers at the exchange point have to be able to treat patients who may be bleeding badly or having difficulty with their airway," Balcerak said. "We have to know how to treat at the exchange point but also in the back of a moving ambulance."

Each M997 ambulance accommodates two medics—one of whom is the driver—and four litter patients or six ambulatory patients. The ground ambulances carry roll-out litters that can be used to "scoop up" immobile patients, as well as spine splints, back boards, burn blankets, suction devices, oxygen and NBC equipment.

SGT James Conway said sixteen people from the 557th shuttled between three camps in Kosovo and Macedonia from November 1999 to April 2000. "When the helicopters couldn't fly, we transported land-mine victims and pregnant women among bases and to local hospitals," Conway said. "In six months, I imagine we went on 400 to 500 missions."

Not all the missions had happy endings, he said. Once, a Special Forces soldier died after being thrown from his vehicle. Another time, a Polish officer was killed while attempting to disable a land mine. Often the ambulance crews transported children injured by land mines.

Despite the tragedies he witnessed, Conway said he was comforted by the fact that he was helping people.

In the background, but no less important, were the safety test pilots and mechanics from each of the 421st's three maintenance platoons. They spent countless hours keeping the aircraft ready to fly, said CSM Tim Burke. "The flying part is the sexy part, but the pilots and air crews can't go anywhere without the unsung heroes," he said.

"After every 500 hours of flying time, we completely tear down an aircraft's engine and transmission," said 159th Medical Company maintenance inspector, SSG Daniel Price, one of 37 maintenance personnel responsible for the company's 15 helicopters. Besides regular aircraft maintenance requirements, his crew has to ensure that the medical equipment aboard the aircraft—such as the rescue hoist and the "carousel" that holds the litters—is operational.

In Kosovo, battalion air crews mostly evacuated other countries' soldiers and transported them to the combat support hospital. If the patients required care not available in Kosovo, "We medevaced them to Macedonia, where the Air Force picked them up for long distance flights elsewhere," Burke said.

The job doesn't come without pain, Burke said. In Kosovo, in 2001, a child fell into a frozen river. "One of our guys was lowered by hoist into the freezing water. Unfortunately, he couldn't find the little girl."

Another real life mission took several helicopters from the 159th Medical Company—one of the 421st's three air ambulance companies—to Austria to aid in the evacuation of skiers trapped by an avalanche.

(Continued)

"We got the call about an avalanche about 2.30 A.M.," said pilot CW2 Eric Gliba. "At 5 A.M., the Austrian government asked for our assistance to evacuate stranded skiers and tourists. At 9 A.M., we got three aircraft off the ground, hooked up with the 12th Aviation Brigade aircrews from Giebelstadt, Germany, and headed to Innsbruck. The next day we began lifting people out of the Tyrol.

"Over a three-day period, flying eight hours a day, we got 400-plus people and one dog out," Gliba said. "The entire operation got about 7,000 people out." Gliba said there were four "lanes" of air rescue traffic. "Our Black Hawks, Marine Corps helicopters, Austrian military helicopters, and civilian aircraft. Above all, there were the news crews. People were flying above and below each other in round-robin fashion."

"The snow was so deep," Gliba said, "that our crew chief sank in to his chest one day trying to escort survivors. That was my first medical evacuation mission since joining the unit in February 1997," he continued, "and it was one of the best missions I've done here because I felt like I was really helping out."

Gliba had other opportunities later on, following Task Force Hawk's deployment to Albania. "We transported the remains of land mine victims to the Army's base at Camp Bondsteel." Gliba also transported an 8 year old girl who had been shot in both arms and one leg to the combat support hospital. On 4 July 1999, Gliba was among rescuers in a tunnel near Camp Able Sentry, in Macedonia, where the first casualty after the air war, a U.S. soldier killed in a traffic collision, took place.

In 2000, elements of the battalion participated in 16 deployments in 13 countries, among them "Atlas Drop," an exercise in Tunisia, "Rescue Eagle" in Rumania, "Victory Strike" in Poland, and "Focus Relief" in Nigeria. Air evacuation medics and crew chiefs in the battalion can expect to be deployed 75 to 100 days a year, Burke said. The unit's OPTEMPO won't be slowing down any time soon. "When the XVIII Airborne Corps leaves the Balkans in 2002, we'll go back."

Meantime, there are plenty of other critical missions to keep the battalion's soldiers and equipment busy. With the U.S. war against terrorism now in its third month, aviation units are among those on highest alert. "Everyone hopes there won't be a great need for medical evacuation resources in conjunction with Operation Enduring Justice," Burke said, "but the future is full of unknowns."

While the unit is not an official Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic (MAST) unit, it does respond to local emergencies and has practiced with German rescue services personnel for such contingencies as train and highway accidents, Doyle said. The battalion also supports the Army's two major European training centers, the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels, and the Grafenwohr live fire ranges, as well as the regional medical center in Landstuhl and the Wurzburg and Heidelberg Medical Department activities (MEDDACs). During training exercises, the designated air ambulance crews stay on site round the clock.

The 421st soldiers also provide medical training to health care providers and health care to the local population in host nations during NATO exercises, Burke said. "In my 25 years in the Army, I've never been in a unit that's so successful, so motivated," Burke said. "These soldiers train because they know something is going to happen, not because they want to be ready just in case it does."

—DUSTOFFer—



Two commanders and the CSM of the 421st Medical Evacuation Battalion at the Army Medical Evacuation Conference.



1LT Susan Snow, the newest officer in the 421st Medical Evacuation Battalion, at the Army Medical Evacuation Conference.

Operation of Aircraft

Effective January 1920, the U.S. Department of the Army published an Official Regulation Handbook, titled *Operation of Aircraft*, that listed the following specific rules of aircraft handling.

1. Don't take the machine into the air unless you are satisfied it will fly.
2. Never leave the ground with the engine leaking.
3. Don't turn sharply when taxiing. Instead of turning sharp, have someone lift the tail around.
4. In taking off, look at the ground and air.
5. Never get out of the machine with the engine running until the pilot relieving you can reach the engine controls.
6. Pilots should carry hankies in a handy place to wipe off goggles.
7. Riding on the steps, wings, or tail of the machine is prohibited.
8. In case the engine fails on takeoff, land straight ahead regardless of obstacles.
9. No machine must taxi faster than a man can walk.
10. Never run the engine so that the blast will blow on other machines.
11. Learn to gauge the altitude, especially on landing.
12. If you should see another machine near you, get out of the way.
13. No two cadets should ever ride together in the same machine.
14. Do not trust the altitude instruments.
15. Before you begin a landing glide, see that no machines are under you.
16. Hedge-hopping will not be tolerated.
17. No spins or back or tail slides will be indulged in as they unnecessarily strain the machine.
18. If flying against the wind and you wish to fly with the wind, don't make a sharp turn near the ground. You may crash.
19. Engines have been known to stop during a long glide. If a pilot wishes to use the engine for landing, he should open the throttle.
20. Pilots will not wear spurs while flying.
21. Don't attempt to force the machine onto the ground with more than flying speed. The result is bouncing and ricocheting.
22. Never take a machine into the air until you are familiar with its controls and instruments.
23. If an emergency occurs while flying, land as soon as possible.

DUSTOFF and Medevac

One of the 1st Cavalry Division guys forwarded a note from Joe Galloway, the co-writer of *We Were Soldiers Once, and Young* and the recent hit movie *We Were Soldiers*, addressing the sometimes criticized role of the 1st Cav's Medevac guys as compared with the non-divisional DUSTOFF units and crews.

Hank:

You can explain to them that, yes, there *is* a difference between Medevac and DUSTOFF. And, yes, during the first year in-country, the 1st Cav Division (Airmobile) had a division-level policy that said Medevac would *not* fly into a landing zone that had not been GREEN (no fire) for at least five minutes. In a place like XRay or Albany, that simply meant they could *not* fly in at all—because there never was a GREEN period during the whole fricken four days. Bad policy. It meant that the slicks had to pick up the slack, and did. The policy changed toward the end of 1966. The movie reflects precisely what happened as does our book. If they want to be “pissed at the author,” feel free; however, I would point out that the author also happens to be one of the biggest cheerleaders for the helo drivers and crew—and goes out of his way to say so at every opportunity.

Regards,

Joe Galloway

Editor's Note: One of the factors that most probably contributed to the establishment of this policy was the early loss of one of the 1st Cav Medevac pilots, Charles Kane. Shortly after arriving in country, he came down to III Corps and received some training and orientation to assist the others new in country. He was killed by hostile fire on one of his first missions.

War Story Corner

Doug Moore, a great storyteller, penned a note to a group of on-line DUSTOFFers targeting Bob Mock in his tales of the air.

Got a pleasant surprise on Saturday when I received a call from MG (Ret) Ken Orr, who came to Japan to command the Medical Command that was formed about the same time Dave Dryden, Jeff Grider, and several of us went over to organize the 587th Medical Detachment and what turned out to be one of the real highlights of my career. General Orr is now 88, but sounded as strong as ever and has remarkable recall. He remembers each of us or what he still calls his "good guys." We must have impressed him, too.

He shared a couple of things with me that I thought you would enjoy. I didn't know the old USARJ building was built by the Japanese as a hospital building for the Americans, but the headquarters types took it over and wouldn't relinquish it during the buildup of medical facilities there. You will remember USARJ was commanded by a Chemical Corps general by the name of Fellenz who had been put out to pasture there. "PeeWee" Fellenz wanted control of our aircraft and made several attempts at getting them.

You'll remember the day when we got our new "D" models. It was raining cats and dogs, so Jay pulled one of the aircraft into the hangar, and Chet Gandy's guys painted red crosses on it. Shortly after it was rolled out on the ramp, I got a call from the USARJ's Chief of Staff's office and was told, in no uncertain terms, that we were to stop painting red crosses on those birds.

Dave and I jumped into my car and raced down the hill (or at least as fast as a Hino Renault would go) and ran into then Colonel (P) Orr's office. After we explained what had happened, he took off at a dead run across the street to see "PeeWee" Fellenz. Orr came back in about twenty minutes and told us to get our butts back up the hill and get the other aircraft painted.

Because it was such a ticklish issue at the time, I never broached the subject with him while we were in Japan;

however, on Saturday I asked him what happened when he went to see General Fellenz. General Orr said it was fairly easy. He said he stormed into Fellenz's office and told him the red crosses were going on the helicopters or else he would get on the next aircraft headed for Hawaii to see General Johnny K. Waters, the USARPAC commander, who was also General Patton's son-in-law. "PeeWee" backed down.

You'll also recall that General Waters visited us and awarded Jay a Distinguished Flying Cross a few months earlier. At that time, General Orr passed along our concern about the old aircraft we were flying and got us new ones.

Si (Simmons), General Orr says you flew him and Billy Graham around, and he especially remembered a trip to Camp Drake. I don't know whether you went into the hospital with him or not, but they wanted to see a soldier who had his arms and legs blown off and was in extremely bad shape. General Orr said he knelt at the bedside with Billy Graham while he prayed for the soldier, and as far as he knew, the young man lived. He has seen Graham a lot of times since then.

I told him all you guys are alive and kicking, and he was so pleased. He asked me to pass his best to all of you and to tell you to stop by and see him if you are in San Antonio.

By the way, he also told me that "PeeWee" Fellenz got his due later on. He retired in the San Antonio area while General Orr was the commander at BAMC. "PeeWee" and his brother apparently got into a Texas bitching session one night, and his brother beat the crap out of him, including breaking his nose and blacking his eye. General Orr said "PeeWee" showed up at his house looking like hell, and Helen cleaned him up before they took him to the emergency room.

—DUSTOFFer—

DUSTOFF Reunion 2003

Make your plans now to attend DUSTOFF Reunion 2003. We've contracted with the Marriott NW Hotel to furnish the facilities. Dates are February 21–23, 2003. Room rates are \$89.00 for regular rooms and \$109.00 for the concierge-level rooms. This rate applies for three days before and three days after the reunion, for those who want to arrive early and stay late.

All DUSTOFF Association members are responsible for their own reservations by calling 800-228-9290 or the hotel direct at 210-377-3900. Mention you are with the DUSTOFF Association to get the special room rates. If you have problems with the reservations, call Dan Gower at 210-832-3031, and he'll likely be able to get it sorted out with the hotel. There is no early registration. Check-in time is 3 P.M., so plan your trip accordingly. Watch for the schedule of events in the Fall/Winter 2002 *DUSTOFFer*. We are hoping the Hall of Fame wall will be completed at the AMEDD Museum by then, so we can finally officially dedicate our Hall of Fame.

The Medic and the Crew Chief

Often neglected, but arguably the most important elements in the extremely successful DUSTOFF team, are the unsung heroes in the patient compartment. Si Simmons penned a tribute to them some time ago.

It has been said that when DUSTOFF pilots are flying, they talk about women, and when they're with women, they talk about flying.

But when they tell war stories of the "You Had To Be There" caliber, the subject usually locks in on the feats of their grungy medic and crew chief.

As DUSTOFF pilots in Vietnam, our task was to ensure that timely medical care was delivered to the wounded, a job that was probably helped along by having a bent for foxy flying and being a button or two short.

The "medical care" we delivered was a different story:

Our medic and crew chief team aboard was the precious cargo for whom the wounded watched and prayed. Through the plexiglass we've watched them—and we've watched the wounded watch them—with litter and weapon in hand, trudge through waist-deep rice paddies, through tangled jungle growth, up rocky mountainsides, hang from skids with outstretched hand, jump to watery depths, tear into burning cockpits, hug a jungle penetrator as it takes them through triple canopy, all too often under withering enemy fire.

We've watched both as they've emptied clips into treelines, bunkers, and jungle hideouts, buying altitude, before turning to continue tending the wounded, halt hemorrhage, close a sucking chest, start fluids, calm hysteria,

breath life, cuddle babies maimed.

As their wounded were off-loaded to definitive care, we've watched the thumbs-up as their tired eyes and muddy faces grin at a life given, and too often, we've watched a sudden stiffness, a desperation, as they carefully, almost reverently, slide a lifeless form on a litter from the hold—then resignation, then "Clear on the right!" and back to the job.

Leaving the flight line at mission's end, we've turned and watched both, in searing heat or monsoon storms and dead of night, tie the blade, check the damage, hose the red from their smelly, rotten station, refit gear and ammo, and begin the tedious and demanding post-flight or the too-often twenty-five-hour inspection. And we get the high sign as we yell, "We'll save chow."

Then, as we trot back to the flight line as quickly as we'd left, we watched their fatigue unveil as we yelled, "Wind 'er up! Any C's on board?" And we watched them suck it up, again, and scurry to lift off again, to save a poor soul, again and again and again.

As DUSTOFF pilots, it has been our greatest honor to serve with this awe-inspiring team. To be a part of it is a dream not dared.

—DUSTOFFer—



Helicopter Flight

Surely, among few other pursuits, flying a helicopter lends itself to lyrical license.

Oh, I've slipped the surly bonds of earth

And hovered out of ground effect on semi-rigid blades;

Earthward I've auto'ed and met the rising brush of unpaved terrain;

And done a thousand things you would never care to.

Skidded and dropped and flared low in the heat-soaked roar

And lost the race to insignificant headwinds.

Forward and up a little in ground effect, I've topped the General's hedge with drooping turns

Where never Skyhawk or even Phantom flew.

Shaking and pulling collective,

I've lumbered the low untrespassed halls of Victor airways,

Put out my hand and touched a tree.

Top of the Schoolhouse

by ISG Dave Litteral

It's 1930 hours, and I am sitting in my office listening to a CD of Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs playing "Foggy Mountain Breakdown." Is there something wrong with this picture? Fort Rucker is a great place. (The nearest Target store is 100 miles away.) If you don't leave here with a banjo on your knee, it's your own fault.

Amidst the ongoing training that USASAM conducts, the year began with a visit from CSM Aplin (MEDCOM), CSM Arista (AMEDD C&S), and SGM Vizcaino (Academy of Health Sciences). CSM Arista, an alumnus of USASAM and one of the original *Chamber Rats*, was proud to show off all the value that the Fort Rucker campus of AMEDD Center and Schools has to offer. CSM Arista was guest speaker of Flight Medic Class 02-01. CSM Aplin assisted in the ceremony by awarding the Distinguished Honor Graduate with an Army Achievement Medal and a MEDCOM CSM Coin of Excellence. During the visit, CSMs Aplin and Arista visited all the AMEDD units in the Wiregrass. Included in the itinerary was a picturesque flight to Cairns AAF and back by UH1V.

The year 2002 continued with a very successful Army Medical Evacuation Conference (AMEC). LTC Montagno and SFC Vallejo put on a very good show. As they will be quick to let you know, they had help from MAJ Joe Houser, (USASAM), ISG Loren Newingham (HHC, 18th MEDCOM), SFC Scott Williams (USASAM), CPT Pete Presely (also USASAM), and SGT Rob McHaney (TXARNG). It goes without saying the conference would not have been possible without the endorsement of the Office of the Assistant Commander for Force Integration (ACFI).

In February, SSG Rodriguez and I attended a planning conference in Orlando for the final phases of the production of the HH60L MEDEVAC Suite Trainer (MST) that is being built for USASAM. The MST is a 1:1 scale model of the cabin section of an HH60L, complete with onboard oxygen system and external rescue hoist. Projected for completion at the end of this year, it will be a very important part of the Flight Medic XXI training program.

Flight Medic XXI is a program that will use a mix of protocol training, Virtual Reality-based EMS training, and mission-based scenario training under complex conditions using realistic, advanced manikins. The program is partly funded by a P8 research grant awarded to USASAM from Telemedicine and Advanced Research Center (TATRC).

An integral part of the training program is the UH60A trainer that has been our NCOs' pet project for the last 13 months. While still lacking a left cockpit door and left gunner's windows, the aircraft conversion from an SH60 to the likeness of a UH60 cabin section (with MEDEVAC B-kit) is complete. Several modifications had to be made to accommodate the unavailability of parts and the inability of Sikorsky to provide assistance to the project. For instance, instead of struts on the main landing gear, hydraulic rams were installed. Also, since the tail landing gear of a UH60 and SH60 are significantly different, nose wheels from two old AGPU generators were salvaged from the Defense Reutilization Marketing Office (DRMO). To the untrained observer, there is no difference. Without the untiring efforts and youthful enthusiasm of SSG Duane Landry, the UH60A trainer would still be a dream. Notwithstanding, he also had to have a lot of consideration from his wife Dawn, who let him go to the USAARL warehouse nearly every night to work on the project. She refers to the aircraft as his "mistress."

Later this summer the aircraft will be dedicated at the "Penn Trainer." It will be named in honor of Flight Medic SSG Greg Penn, who died, along with his entire crew, while on a MAST mission in Eleven Mile Canyon, Colorado, in 1982. If anyone has any personal information on SSG Penn, please e-mail me: davidlitteral@msn.com.

USASAM was invited to exhibit the UH60A trainer at the 2002 Association of the United States Army Medical Symposium. NCOs transported the trainer by flatbed trailer from Fort Rucker to Fort Sam Houston and then to The Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio. Seeing what appeared to be a UH60A MEDEVAC helicopter travel nearly a thousand miles each way on I-10 was a unique sight! On the return trip we passed a vehicle with a DUSTOFFer decal in the window. I can only imagine what they thought.

NCOs from Fort Polk MEDEVAC, 571st Medical Company, and USASAM were involved in writing scenarios based on actual missions. USASAM computer-guru, Rob Nand, produced a very cool and creative Web-based program to display the scenarios on the computers. DEI from Orlando built a custom-made ICS system using actual ICS boxes that lets flight medic students not only plug in their helmets and talk, but also dial up a cellular phone and call for medical advice (limit three lifelines). Research Triangle Institute, out of North Carolina, put together a customized version of Virtual EMS using a Kandahar scenario to wow the visitors to the exhibit. An advanced manikin (SIM-MAN) was provided by Medical Plastics Laboratories from Gatesville, Texas.

The Surgeon General, LTG Peake, visited the exhibit. He later stated during an NCO plenary session that the Flight Medic Display was the type of thing NCOs should be doing. Other visitors included LTG (Ret.) Stroup, AUSA, and GEN (Ret.) McCaffery, former U.S. drug czar. Both were equally impressed that a group of determined NCOs had designed and built not only the UH60A but also the overall Flight Medic XXI program as execution of the Dean's intent.

Also exhibited was a video of SSG Mumm completing instructor qualification on the 65-foot hoist tower, aided by NVGs. With SFC Sutton on the hoist control and SSG Landry as Standardization Instructor, the trio completed the first

(Schoolhouse, continued on page 26.)

From the Wiregrass

by LTC Gino Montagno

Greetings from UCLA.

In case you didn't know, our office has moved. We are now located in room 112, building 4506, Joker Street. We are co-located with Directorate of Combat Developments.

United States Army School of Aviation Medicine recently hosted the AMEDD Pre-Command Course (PCC). Twelve future commanders received personal mentoring, training and advice from some of the AMEDD's most successful senior leaders. The two-week course covered every imaginable topic and received laudatory comments from all the attendees. Many of the topics taught were gleaned from a needs survey tendered at the Army Medical Evacuation Conference (AMEC) in San Antonio, Texas. The 2003 PCC is already in the planning stages. Input from the field is welcomed and always appreciated. Point of contact is USASAM Operations at (334) 255-7447. Highly recommend all future commanders attend this course.

The lack of operational hoist training and maintenance classes continues to be a challenge. We are attempting to revitalize the training and hope to have the first class around the end of July. Please don't hesitate to contact this office if you have any issues or questions about the hoist. TRW/Lucas is sending a hoist technician to Korea and Germany to assist our evacuation battalions with their hoist problems. The hoist overhaul program is in full swing. Turn around time is averaging 3 1/2 weeks. Please contact us if you have any questions about the turn in procedures. MSG Vallejo is the AMEDD's hoist NCOIC, and he can be reached at DSN 558-2917/1170 or commercial (334) 255-2917/1170.

In case you haven't heard, MAJ Pete Smart replaced LTC Gene Pfeiffer as our AMEDD representative in the Utility Helicopter Program Manager's Office. MAJ Smart comes to the office with a wealth of experience and has already drawn first blood on the HH-60L gremlins. I want to personally wish Pete the best of luck as he takes on this new challenge. Gene Pfeiffer has done a remarkable job and will be missed. He is known as the "sage" when it comes to the UH-60Q/HH-60L. Gene, thanks for all the help you've provided this office and for 20+ years of dedicated service to this great country.

Finally, I would like to welcome LTC Van Joy to UCLA. Van takes my place around mid-July. It's been a great flight, but it's time to relinquish the controls. Thanks to each and everyone who has made the ride smooth and enjoyable. By the way, still waiting for an 06 to step up to the plate! Stop by if you're ever in town, and Van will treat you to lunch. "Be safe, keep it up and in the green." DUSTOFF!

Consultant's Corner

by COL Scott Heintz

Greetings, everyone! I'll begin with the latest on ATI. BLUF. Here is the distribution plan presented to the Army G3 for FORSCOM Air Ambulance units: 507th and 57th will be resourced at 13 aircraft each; 498th, 571st, 82nd, 54th and the 50th will be resourced at 12 each. The TDA units at Ft. Rucker/Irwin/Polk will be resourced with 6 UH60s at each location, and Ft. Drum will receive four. The three companies in DUSTOFF Europe will be resourced at 10 aircraft per company. The 52nd's 377th and 542nd in Korea will continue to be resourced at 15 aircraft per company. The 68th will retain 15 aircraft under current distribution of nine in Hawaii and six in Alaska. The USARSO TDA will retain four UH60s, and USAARL will continue to be resourced with one UH60.

Final brief/decision to the Chief of Staff of the Army is forthcoming. A great deal of thanks go to a couple of unsung heroes who have steadfastly supported our position throughout this arduous fight: COL Gerber for being point man on this issue for the TSG, and LTC Randy Anderson for his Herculean effort throughout this process/fight to retain our MEDEVAC assets. As bad as this may look, consider that we did not lose one flag, while our aviation brothers lost 25 (deactivated or migrated to the ARNG). Pending decision remains on how units will report on their respective USRs. Options are: 1. requirement remains at 15 and units report against that requirement. 2. Exception MTOEs are created to reflect the reduced, resourced, number of aircraft in each unit as the actual requirement. I will refrain from offering my viewpoint on this issue, but most recent Total Army Analysis reflects requirements based on a 15-ship structure.

Summertime brings numerous PCSs and opportunities to the DUSTOFF community. We have two evacuation battalion changes of command: the 36th at Ft. Hood and the 421st in Europe. I'd like to offer my personal congratulations to LTCs Nanton and Doyle for the numerous contributions they both made during their respective tenures of command. Both raised the bar by which excellence is measured. Big WHOOAHs to both. Congratulations also to LTC Harp, who will take the colors of the 36th, and to LTC Sargent, who will take the reins of DUSTOFF Europe. Best of luck to both of you. Hats off to commander LTC Don West and the magnificent soldiers of the 52nd Medical Evacuation battalion in

(Corner, continued on page 30.)

iteration of night tower training. In the near future, flight medic students will deploy from the tower under day, night, and NVG conditions into the training site to respond to a simulated downed aircraft. Their mission will be to find the patient in a mock-crash of a U-21 aircraft and package the patient and return to the tower. Upon returning, the flight medic and patient will be hoisted into the tower, where the scenario will be culminated with an IV under goggles and a radio call on the ICS. Flight Medic XXI holds many challenges for the next group of Flight Medic students.

In May, USASAM was host to this year's crop of incoming MEDEVAC Commanders. The MEDEVAC Commanders' Pre-command Course, conducted by MAJ Joe Houser and SFC Ian Gosling under the direction of LTC Bill Layden, was one of the best classes seen in recent years. Many thanks go out to the several guest speakers who took time away from their own commands to impart wisdom to the fledgling commanders. We wish the attendees success in their new commands.

In the interest of space, I won't list USASAM's Honor Graduates in this column. You can find them in the "new member" section. Instead, I need to take a few lines of space to say farewell as First Sergeant of USASAM. As I have been selected for promotion to Sergeant Major, Charlene and I will be leaving Fort Rucker for Fort Bliss and the U.S. Army Sergeants' Major Academy. I want to publicly thank the leadership that I have had (too numerous to name) throughout my career, who have helped me get to this point. I especially want to thank my current boss, COL James McGhee, Dean of USASAM, and LTC Bill Layden for allowing NCOs the opportunity to carry out their vision of where flight medics need to be. To the officers, civilian staff, and the NCOs of USASAM, I thank you all for making USASAM such a great and successful organization. Also part of USASAM's success is the partnership it enjoys with Lyster Army Hospital and U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory. Lastly, to the staff of the DUSTOFF Association, I would like to say keep up the great work keeping the spirit of MAJ Charles Kelly alive.

My replacement is 1SG Jayme Johnson. He and his wife Janine (SFC Osterberg) are coming out of high-speed assignments at Fort Polk. They will be bringing a unique variety of skills and experience to USASAM. 1SG Johnson will have all new NCOICs in each of the USASAM sections. SFC Calvin Diggs will be the senior NCO in Education Branch; SFC Mike Sherman is lead NCO of the Altitude Physiology Branch, and SFC Roberto Rosales is our new "go-to guy" in Ops. I wish them the greatest success—DUSTOFF!

—DUSTOFFer—

News Flash You May Have Missed

Dated New York, this brief article was titled "Fonda regrets her 'Hanoi Jane' image."

"Jane Fonda says she feels awful about the famous photo with North Vietnamese soldiers in 1972 that sealed her reputation as 'Hanoi Jane.'

"I will go to my grave regretting the photograph of me in an antiaircraft carrier, which looks like I was trying to shoot at American planes,' Fonda told *O*, the Oprah magazine."

How to Contribute Articles to *The DUSTOFFer*

The DUSTOFFer would like to publish your article. If you have a recollection of a particular DUSTOFF or MAST mission, please share it with our members. If your unit has been involved in an outstanding rescue mission or worthwhile program, please submit your essay about it to *The DUSTOFFer*. Send photographs with your article or attach them electronically to your e-mail.

Send typed, double-spaced hard copy to the address below, or e-mail your article to secretary@dustoff.org or jtrus5@aol.com.

Please send your contributions to:

The DUSTOFFer
P. O. Box 8091
San Antonio, TX 78208

Pat Brady's Rhetoric Sets the Tone for the Hall of Fame

Pat spoke to the honored guests and awardees on the occasion of the Banquet at the 2002 Reunion and its featured awards ceremony.

It is a great honor for me to be here. Three good friends are being honored, and I flew with two of them. I rescued one of them when he was seriously hurt.

As a member of the Medal of Honor Society and a General officer, I have known personally and professionally some of the great heroes and leaders of our time. But there are here tonight, physically and in spirit, men who never got a lot of medals, or rank, or became famous, whom I admire more.

I have never met aviators who could match the skills of the DUSTOFF pilots. Nor have I met crews to match the DUSTOFF crews. Tonight we will induct one of those crews, a pilot, a medic, and a crew chief. That makes it special because this induction makes the strongest possible statement about what DUSTOFF was all about. We were a crew, a team and we survived through teamwork and teamwork alone.

But it is also special because we are inducting enlisted men. I want to focus my remarks on the contributions of the DUSTOFF enlisted personnel. What they do is not glamorous, but it is glorious.

John Temperilli represents the pilots. He is a pioneer, and there is not a better representative of what we were. But John got his start as an enlisted man and he fits into everything I will say about our enlisted guys.

Steve Hook and Wayne "Tiny" Simmons are heroes, but more than that, they represent the immortal 99%, those who never got recognition for their heroism; they were the hero makers. We all stood on their shoulders, the same shoulders that carried so many wounded.

In my Army life, so many of the extraordinary people I have known were enlisted. The good enlisted had a special psyche that was unique and absolutely indispensable on the battlefield. That psyche is what wins wars. The good enlisted were courageous certainly, fiery, proud, even a bit arrogant at times. They asked no quarter and gave none. They dealt in mission and responsibility, not rank. They respected rank but were not intimidated by it. Tell me what you want done, don't BS me, and get the hell out of the way.

Kelly had that great enlisted psyche and, in fact, started as an enlisted as did John. I think many WOs had this same psyche. They were more enlisted than officer.

Talk about a leadership challenge; try 8 WOJs, some in their teens. But they would fly down the tube of a .50 cal. I will never forget my first sergeant as a platoon leader in my first Army job, SGT Ivey. I would not have made 1LT without him. I remember accidentally meeting him in a restaurant one night and offering to buy him a drink. I never forgot his response: "I never drink with officers," he said.

And the great SGT Webster Anderson, a triple amputee MOH recipient from Vietnam. In South Carolina, they call him Mr. Sergeant Webster Anderson. By some coincidence, I rescued him the night he got the Medal of Honor and we have been close through the years. On one occasion, we were visiting a school when one kid asked him if knowing it would cost him three limbs, would he do it again. I never forgot his response. He said, "Kid, I only have one arm left, but my country can have it any time they want."

And SGT John Hogdon—the Flat Iron building is named for him at Fort Rucker. I could talk about him all day, but the fact that he took our eleven H-19s through an IG inspection without a gig, not one, says a lot. The fact that he was upset with me when he found out I was amazed, that I never expected it, says even more. There is no counting the lives that this maintenance genius saved.

This organization was started by an enlisted man, Egor. For years, we officers talked about doing this, but it took an E6 to get it done. (Egor took a well-deserved bow.)

In retirement, I have worked with many veteran's organizations, organizations that do so much for America. With their youth programs and their unqualified patriotism, there is no way to measure what they do for America. In almost every instance, they are led by a former enlisted.

The courage of the DUSTOFF enlisted man has never received the recognition it deserves. When I think of how much I hated to ride in the back of a Huey and not have control of that bird, and these guys were doing it all the time. There were times we let them down, but I can never remember them letting us down or the patient.

The DUSTOFF pilot is known as a great lifesaver, and each of us treasures the number of patients we evacuated. In reality, the pilots were simply equipment operators, the enlisted were the hands of the lifesavers, both for the patients and for us in the care they gave our birds.

An so tonight, we honor two, and in so doing, we honor through them the immortal 99% who are not in the Hall of Fame, never will be. But there would be no Hall of Fame, there would be no heroes, and DUSTOFF would not be the greatest lifesaver in the history of warfare without them. That special enlisted psyche is our greatest legacy.

And that's what this is all about, establishing a legacy. That is vital, not because of the honors that accrue to individuals, surely of varying degrees of worthiness—and some of us have been houored to death—but what we do is important because of the example, the legacy we leave for those who follow.

That is the essence of our worth. Our worth is no longer operational—we have had our time in the arena; we will

never be there again. All that is left for us now is to set an example for those who follow, to preserve the spirit of DUSTOFF for future battlefields. We do that in part through this Hall of Fame, by recognizing individuals who possess that spirit.

Legacies are a tradition in Democracies, and someone wrote about the importance of tradition in a democracy when he said that a democratic people profess to object to a person being disqualified from anything simply because of an accident of birth. Tradition objects to a person being disqualified from anything because of the accident of death.

Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogantly oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking around. Tradition is the democracy of the dead; it keeps their timeless strength and wisdom ever in our councils. The example of those we honor tonight, what we do here tonight, will contribute to our strength on many battlefields in many years to come.

I would like to close with a toast: to Charles Kelly, the father of the spirit of DUSTOFF, and those we honor tonight, especially our great enlisted, who have exhibited that spirit.

-DUSTOFFer-

Closing Out the Flight Plan

Marmie Wilcox, wife of DUSTOFFer Bill, passed away on 3 January 2002. She was a long and loving friend to DUSTOFF and its meaning to the Army.

Long-time DUSTOFF aviator Francis A. Copeland closed out his flight plan on 20 December 2001 after an extended illness. Frank had originally joined the 1st Helicopter Ambulance Company (Provisional) in Korea in 1954 and had several exciting tours in the Republic of Vietnam, highlighting a long career of superior service. He was one of the longest living survivors of a lung transplant operation performed several years ago.

The DUSTOFFer has learned that Bill Bentley died on May 14, 2002. Bill is survived by his wife Joanie among other family members. If anyone is interested in contributing to Bill's favorite charity, it's the Franciscan Fathers of the Eternal Word, 5821 Old Leeds Rd., Irondale, Alabama 35210.

New Entries on the Flight Manifest (Since November 2001)

Joey Neve Sr.	Fort Bragg, NC	M
Ian Womack	San Antonio, TX	LM
John Hinton	Metuchen, NJ	M
Tony Irwin	San Antonio, TX	LM
Laurance Longacre	Fort Riley, KS	LM
Daniel Bird	Thomasville, PA	LM
Melvin Litwhiler	Wilmington, DE	M
Brady Gallagher	(2CF7 Dist. Honor Grad.)	
	Daleville, AL	M
Mark Casteel	Phelan, CA	M
Mark Fulk	(2CF7 Dist. Honor Grad.)	
	Carroll Valley, PA	M
Jeffrey George	Woodlawn, TN	LM
Marvin Broadwater	Travis AFB	LM
Jack Blundell	Biloxi, MS	LM
Brian Kueter	APO, AP	LM
Tommy Markham	Norman, AK	LM
Terence McDowell	Fort Irwin, CA	M
Randy Sullivan	Huntsville, AL	M
John McNally	Dothan, AL	M
Don Sewell	North Potomac	LM
Carl Smith	San Antonio, TX	LM
Jeff George	Woodlawn, TN	LM
John Marshall	Plano, TX	LM
Mark Knight	Copperas Cove, TX	LM
Gilberto Vallejo	Fort Rucker, AL	LM
David Williams	Fort Rucker, AL	LM
David Spero	Cibolo, TX	LM
Eric Spivey	Isle of Palms, SC	LM
Lawrence McBean	Brandywine, MD	LM
Frederic Berhrens	Powhatan, VA	LM
Jario Gallego	Fort Bragg, NC	LM
Robert McHaney	Georgetown, TX	LM
Maroe Alba	Fort Irwin, CA	LM
Arthur Lee	Apache Junction	M
Joseph Horvath	Apache Junction	M
George Meyers	Fort Buchanan, PR	LM
Stephen Mosley	San Antonio, TX	LM
Chester Crump	Live Oak, TX	LM
James Ralph	Inverness, FL	LM
Michael Derby	Junction City, KS	LM
Jennie Mathews	Fort Rucker, AL	LM
Christopher Howard	APO, AE	LM
Bruce McCartney	Sunbury, GA	LM
Carlos Fraire	APO, AP	LM
Wayne Knowles	Fort Polk, LA	LM
Jeff Hewitt	Fort Irwin, CA	LM
Jimmy Rasche	APO, AE	LM
Johnny Walker	Glendale, CA	M
Dominic Bruno	Lehigh, FL	M



Worthwhile Lines for Efficiency Reports

Several comment lines gleaned from U.S. Military Officer Efficiency Reports and those of the British Royal Navy and Marines may be useful to those on active duty.

- Not the sharpest knife in the drawer.
- Got into the gene pool while the life guard wasn't watching.
- A room temperature IQ.
- A prime candidate for natural deselection.
- Got a full six-pack, but lacks the plastic thingy to hold it all together.
- Bright as Alaska in December.
- Gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn't coming.
- So dense, light bends around him.
- If brains were taxed, he'd get a rebate.
- If he were any more stupid, he'd have to be watered twice a week.
- Was left on the Tilt-A-Whirl a bit too long as a baby.
- Wheel is turning, but the hamster is dead.
- His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity.
- I would not breed from this officer.
- He has carried out each and every one of his duties to his entire satisfaction.
- He would be out of his depth in a car park puddle.
- This young lady has delusions of adequacy.
- This medical officer has used my ship to carry his genitals from port to port, and my officer to carry him from bar to bar.
- Since my last report, he has reached rock bottom and has started to dig.
- She sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.
- He has the wisdom of youth and the energy of old age.
- Works well when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap.
- This man is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.



What's New at www.dustoff.org

The DUSTOFF Association Web site (www.dustoff.org) is alive and well, with over 1500 unique visitors per month. Not surprising, the most searched word for people finding our site is DUSTOFF (38% of visitors). The least searched word for folks finding our site is OCONUS (.01% of the visitors). But new folks finding our site through the search engines is a rare case. Only 18.75% of the folks visiting our site come through the major search engines like Yahoo! and Google. Over 79% of the time folks come from another Web site. There are hundreds of sites on the Internet that have links to the DUSTOFF Association site. Our site is extremely popular with other military-related Web sites.



Medal of Honor recipient MG Patrick Brady (Ret.) and 421st Medical Battalion Commander, LTC Dennis Doyle, present the Order of St. Michael to MAJ Jonathan C. Fristoe, commander, 236th Medical Company, in Landstuhl, Germany. The ceremony was held at a recent battalion formal event in Mainz, Germany. Photo from an article in Army Aviation magazine, December 2001.

Letters & e-mail to *The DUSTOFFer*

Dear Editor: When we established the Florida DUSTOFF Association, all or most of our members donated one of their unit patches from Vietnam. These were all sewn on a poncho liner, and it became a banner of sorts for us. For two years, the patch blanket was proudly displayed day and night at our reunions, and we had no problems. Several years ago, that banner was stolen by someone during the night. We had a suspect, but couldn't prove it. It wasn't one of our members. Since I am now Chairman of the Board, I have decided I want to make it a project to replace this banner.

Would it be possible for the DUSTOFFer to run a little story about this incident to see if we could get some of the active duty units to send us one of their unit patches? I wouldn't dream of asking anyone for their original Nam patches. We would just like to replace our banner.

Don (Hoss) Caldwell
3760 University Boulevard, # 1081
Jacksonville, Florida 32216
e-mail: artnhoss@bellsouth.net

Dear Editor: (Talking about awards) In August 1967, I was back from a standby, and my ship was in periodic. Captain Craig Honaman, who was our awards officer, needed to go to the Military Advisory Command, Vietnam (MACV) awards section, so I volunteered to drive him over there. We arrived at MACV to check on several awards, and as I remember, two Silver Stars were pending. Captain Honaman was talking to the Awards Officer and found out that they had been downgraded to DFCs, and he was upset. Everyone had recommended approval, and statements from the infantry supported the awards. I will remember as long as I live the answer the MACV lieutenant colonel told him: "Captain, you have to understand, if we gave DUSTOFF a medal for every heroic action, all we would be doing is giving DUSTOFF medals. It requires a certain amount of heroism just to fly in DUSTOFF, and they have to reach a higher bar."

For years, I didn't understand what he was saying. But I have come to realize that this was the greatest compliment anyone could give us. I was lucky to live through the medals I received in DUSTOFF and in Lam Son 719 in 1971; getting medals is something that comes from doing your job. The one thing I know for sure, knowing and flying with Mike Novosel and Pat Brady, is that they, like most of us, are wondering why they were given the medal. We all feel, I think, that the true heroes are on the wall in Washington.

Thomas L. "Egor" Johnson

Editor's Note: The following letter was sent to *The DUSTOFFer* after his reflection on the Saturday morning discussion at the reunion business meeting concerning the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame. The author of the following letter is a DUSTOFF pilot from the early years in Vietnam, lifetime member of the Association, and a retired military chaplain. He penned this letter in response to a potential nominee who had protested that he "... did not deserve or warrant his efforts. The men performed well, and I enjoyed the one of many gifts that the Lord has given me."

Dear Nominee: You say you did not deserve or warrant my efforts on your behalf for the nomination to the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame, and on one level I agree with you. Everyone who honorably served and risked their lives to save the lives of others as a DUSTOFF crew member truly belongs in the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame. On another and yet a higher level, however, I disagree with you. You and several others whom I personally know, and those others (dead or alive) who are known only to the DUSTOFF membership, should be singled out for their outstanding contributions, so the whole DUSTOFF story and history may be told for the benefit of those who will follow. Tradition is history. History is the account of the stories of those who make it. Tradition and history teach and carry the future. Without the stories of people like you and others to come, who will tell the story? Very few will read the history of DUSTOFF in the annals of the files of the past, but many will read the plaques and stories on the walls of museums and public buildings. Memorials and stories belong to the public and to the future. We must tell the DUSTOFF story, or there will be no DUSTOFF for the generations to come. Your contributions are valued, and your story must be told—not for your sake, but for the sake of the future, a place we cannot go.

Walt Harris

(Continued)

The DUSTOFF Store

Item	Price	Size	Quantity	Total
Ball cap — Maroon	\$10			\$ _____
Ball cap — White	\$10			\$ _____
Ball cap — Tan	\$10			\$ _____
Golf shirt — Maroon (sm, med, lg, xl, xxl)	\$20	_____	_____	\$ _____
To mail shirts and caps, add \$5 per order (not necessary if attending reunion).				\$ _____
DUSTOFF Decal	\$1			\$ _____
DUSTOFF Koozie	\$2			\$ _____
DUSTOFF Coffee Mug	\$8			\$ _____
DUSTOFF Pocketknife	\$4			\$ _____
DUSTOFF Coin	\$5			\$ _____
DUSTOFF Tie Tac/Lapel Pin	\$5			\$ _____
DUSTOFF or Medevac Print	\$10			\$ _____
DUSTOFF Flag/Giudon				
One-sided	\$40			\$ _____
Two-sided	\$60			\$ _____
To mail coins, koozies, knives, posters, decals and directories, add \$3 per order (not necessary if attending reunion).				\$ _____
TOTAL ORDER				\$ _____

Send check or money order, payable to DUSTOFF Assn., to:

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